

kamadukilikon

神無月紅

イラスト 夕薙



[legend]

Renji Saeki, an ordinary boy living in rural *Tohoku* region, has died. All seems to be over... Yet, he wakes up, to a vision full of shimmering white with a glowing sphere floating right in front. The sphere claims to be, an magestian from another dimension, in search of a heir to pass on the waltz of it has perfected. With the magical powers and a new physical existence, *Renji's* adventure in *Elgin*, the magical world begins...

Legend

Arc 2 - Rank Up Test

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Epub: [Henkanepubs](#)

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Chapter 43

The day after the duties of the Orc subjugation force were completed. Due to the fatigue from fighting, Rei slept until noon before waking up due to hunger. After having an early lunch at the Dusk Wheat, he headed to the guild with Set.

Among the people who saw the figure of Set in the parade the day before, there were probably many who were taught of his existence. Different from usual, they only gave cries of surprise at seeing Set at first instead of running away, there were even some people who would give food to Set.

To say thank you, Set gave a cry and shook his tail each time. Seeing that, the person would cautiously pet his head.....and because of this, it was already into the afternoon when they finally arrived at the guild.

「Then, Set, wait for me at the usual place.」
「Guru~」

As Set went to the place he was familiar with, opposite the carriage waiting area, Rei entered the guild.

If there was something different from usual, it was the figures of several adventurers, who participated in the Orc subjugation force, who went and petted Set on the head or gave him some food as a substitute greeting before entering the guild. Receiving friendly attention, he gave a happy cry.

Upon entering the guild, he went straight to the counter without looking at the request board.

Looking around, he saw several adventurers in the guild, but he went to talk to Lenora without bothering them.

「Ah, hello Rei-san. Have you come for the rewards for the Orcs?」
「Ah. Yes, I also want to hand in the proof of subjugation parts as well as sell materials.」
「Yes, no problem.」

Lenora confirmed it as she nodded, A lot of right ears, which were the proof of subjugation, came out of the Misty Ring. The skin and teeth of Orcs, Orc

Archers, Orc Mages and Orc Generals were usable materials. Because of the magic power residing in them, the eyes, heart, tongue and back teeth of an Orc Mage could also be used in medicine and alchemy. The internal organs of Orc Generals could be used in alchemy while their bones and tendons could be used for weapons and bowstrings. And then there were the magic stones of Orcs and Orc Archers.

In addition, there were obviously differences in how the materials were collected. There were those that were collected perfectly like Elk's and there were ones damaged here and there like the ones handled by Rei, who was lacking in this area.

「Um, please wait a minute. Kenny, you help me for a bit.」

The reason was that the amount placed on the counter was a lot more than expected. Lenora called out to Kenny who had been next to her, smiling, eyeing a chance to talk to Rei.

As if waiting for that, Kenny approached the counter to continue screening the materials.

「As for this and this, the collection was perfect. This one is useless. This..... though it's close it's still okay.....」

「Hey, Kenny. I did ask you but don't be partial to Rei-san. Because the collection was sloppy, don't put the tongue of the Orc Mage with the quality goods.」

「Ah, really? Un, I feel that Lenora is a bit harsh.....」

While carrying out such an exchange, they processed the materials and classified them into ones that could be used that those that couldn't

「Hey, what's with that amount of materials. Moreover, aren't those the teeth of an Orc General. Why does that brat.....」

Surprised at the mountain of Orc materials at the counter, one of the adventurers who was drinking in the bar in the guild asked his friend who was drinking next to him.

Though the adventurer was amazed for a moment when he saw it, he immediately nodded as he remembered something.

「Ah, you returned to Gimuru this morning.」

「Hm? Ah.」

「Haven't you heard the rumors in the city? That Orcs built a village near the city of Gimuru.」

「Of course I know it. I mean, I've been forced to hear it at the inn and shops ever since I came back to the city this morning. Seriously, if it wasn't for the escort request, I would have joined the Orc subjugation force.....hey, no way.」

Talking up to there, he finally understood what his friend was saying.

「Hey, wait a minute. So what is it? Did even that brat join the Orc subjugation force?」

「That's right.」

「You're kidding? However you look at it, that brat is still in his mid teens.」

「However, did you know, according to the story I heard from some other guys who participated in the subjugation force, that guy killed an Orc King?」

「.....An Orc King? That brat?」

「Ah. And guess what, he recently registered with the guild as a G rank adventurer and defeated an Orc King.Like I said don't be surprised at having to take your words back.」

「G rank.....」

While looking at his friend who was dumbfounded at the contents of the story which was beyond his understanding, he lifted the wine to his mouth with a nasty smile as he was just as astonished when he had heard it for the first time.

「That? Rei-kun. Is this all the materials?」

In front of the counter that was filled with materials, Kenny asked Rei.

「Ah.」

However, Rei only gave a small nod.

「There's still magic stones of Orcs and Orc Archers.....and materials from the Orc King.」

「I'll explain the situation a bit. I have uses for the magic stones of Orc Mages and Orc Generals here. I regards to the material of an Orc King, I'm sorry but I don't want to sell it.」

Because he was only able to get two magic stones each from Orc Mages and

Orc Generals, thinking about the possibility that Set and the Death Scythe could learn skills, he couldn't sell them. Similarly, I couldn't sell the magic stone of the Orc King, of which he only had one of.

As for materials, he stored the precious B rank monster materials into the Misty Ring, the same way as with the Queen Ant.

「Un, though I wanted you to sell it if possible.....it's no use?」

Though Kenny said that while emphasizing her proud chest, Rei only shook his neck slightly.

「It's because there are circumstances for the time being.」

「Is that so.....well, it can't be helped. Then, are you selling all these?」

「Ah.」

「With this quantity, you might have to wait a little because it will take a while.」

There was no helping it as that much was that much, in the meantime, he looked at the request board until the assessment and appraisal were completed.

(Because I heard I'll be going up to rank E today, first of all, I'll look at the D rank and E rank monster subjugation quests.)

Muttering in his mind, he only looked at the subjugation requests, he suddenly discovered a urgent request.

「.....Dragon Lizard?」

Yes, a subjugation request for Dragon Lizards with a request rank E was pinned there.

(Is it a Dragon? Or is it a Lizard?Ah well, because it's rank E it's certainly a Lizard, it's too a low rank if it's a Dragon.)

Rei, who was concerned about the strange name, took out the monster dictionary, that he had bought in the bookstore, from the Misty Ring.

『Dragon Lizard』

Though it had dragon in it's name, it's species was a large lizard. However, it was called a dragon because its size was larger than that of an adult human. Since it was a lizard, it obviously didn't breathe fire, but because it's attacks

boast a considerable strength, it required care when fighting.

Though its toxicity was weak, its fangs contained a poison that dulled movements. Because it was a lizard, ice magic was its weakness. Moreover, it would not falter due to pain from injuries. For this E rank monster, the tip of the tail was the proof of subjugation. Its selling price was 1 silver coin. In addition, its meat had a strong taste which gourmets liked.

(A giant lizard.....though its interesting.)

「Rei-san, the assessment of the material has been completed.」

Being called by Lenora, he stored the monster dictionary into the Misty Ring and headed to the counter.

「The reward for proofs of subjugation, the purchase of materials and magic stones and the reward for the Orc subjugation quest, adding individual achievements all together.....the reward comes down to 9 platinum coins.」

The moment Lenora said the amount of money at the counter, adventurers inside the guild who had secretly been watching Rei became noisy.

「Hey, you're kidding? Isn't 9 platinum coins the average reward of a rank A or rank B request?」

「Idiot, that kid Rei played an important role during the Orc subjugation.」

「That's amazing, how about he enters our party.」

「It's useless. Isn't one of the rumors he defeated an Orc King?」

「.....Really?」

「Ah. I mean, think about it. The reward of the Orc subjugation is two platinum coins. Even if there are materials and proofs of subjugation, will it amount to 9 platinum coins? You won't reach that amount unless you defeat the enemy's leader.」

While hearing such conversation, he received the 9 platinum coins from Lenora, took out a pouch from the Misty Ring to put the money in and stored it back into the Misty Ring.

「.....That's convenient as usual, isn't it. Ah, because your rank has also gone up, please hand over your guild card.」

「Ah, that's right.」

After collecting the guild card and heading to the back of the counters, she returned after a few minutes. Though she tried to look calm, her face had the colour of unrest.

「Here you go, it's returned. Rank up, congratulations. But, that.....」
「I was surprised that I suddenly went up to rank E, right?」
「Yes. That, to be honest, I was pinching my cheeks thinking that it was a dream.I've been a receptionist here for several years but it's the first time I've seen a person rise 2 ranks from a single request.」
「Uwa~, really? As I thought, you're amazing Rei.」

Hearing Lenora's words, Kenny looked at Rei's guild card.

Certainly, the guild rank had been changed from G to E.

Hearing Lenora and Kenny's words, the guild became noisy again, but he stored the guild card into the Misty Ring without minding it.

「Well then, thanks for your help.」
「Have you picked up a request for today?」
「As expected of yesterday, I'll be slowly spending today with Set.」
「Ah, that's a shame. When I'm free after this, lets go to a place and drink together.」
「Wai-, Kenny!? What the hell are you thinking?」

Though Lenora's angry voice came out at Kenny's invitation to Rei, she waved her hand at Rei without caring to explain.

While smiling wryly at the state of the two, he left the guild with a light goodbye.

「Gururu~」

As Rei came out of the guild, Set greeted him with a happy cry.

Though there were a few adventurers and residents nearby, Set gave a short cry and left the place as soon as he saw Rei.

Some of them sent Set off with regretful faces.

To the changes in the surroundings, Rei recalled the events from several days ago as he scratched Set's head while smiling involuntarily.

「I've kept you waiting. Then let's go out.」

「Guru~」

Giving a small cry at Rei's words, the headed towards the gate on the main street.

「Huh? Another request right after yesterday's?」

Rei handed the Necklace of Subservient Monster and guild card to Ranga, who was in charge of the procedures.

「No, not at all. However, I thought I'd take a short trip with Set in the sky.」

「I see. Ah, as I said before, please don't take off or land near the city.」

「Ah, I understand.」

「At the same time, congratulations on your rank up. Still, to rank up two ranks at once. That's amazing.」

Ranga said that as he saw that the rank displayed on the guild card had changed from G to E, Rei gave a small smile.

Ranga seemed satisfied and returned the guild card to Rei.

「Well the, I'll return the guild card to you.Rei-san.」

「Yes?」

「The Orc subjugation, thanks for your hard work. As a commander of the security force, I wish to express my gratitude as one of the residents in the city.」

Rei was taken aback for a moment by Ranga's lowered head but immediately put up a wry smile.

「Don't worry about it. I also obtained various things from the request. As you said, my rank also went up. I myself have also set up residence in this city of Gimuru. It was fortunate that the danger of the Orcs was avoided.」

Lightly waving his hand, he sat on Set's back as they moved a short distance away from the city.

「Set, I'm counting on you.」

「Gurururururu~!」

With a sharp cry, he flapped his huge wings after a run up of a few steps

before stepping into the air and going up into the sky.

Although there were thinly spread clouds, unlike yesterday's weather, they weren't rain clouds. If anything, Rei felt that in this summer weather, it was like a small thunder cloud.

As Rei was wearing the Dragon Robe, which could be called a simple air conditioner, he could bathe in the sunlight mindlessly without caring for the temperature as Set flew for several hours.

However, it was a distance of a few hours by Set's wings. If a person were to walk normally along the ground, it would take a whole day, several days if there were issues.

Naturally, there was a reason to go that far from the city. The purpose was to perform the absorption of the magic stones that he had gotten from the Orc subjugation.

Rei looked down at the ground while flying through the sky and discovered a clearing in the forest where no trees were growing. Looking roughly at the surroundings, the figures of monsters or adventurers couldn't be seen.

「Right, Set. Go down there.」
「Guru~」

Giving a small cry at Rei's words, Set landed at the designated location. After landing on the ground, he quickly looked at the surroundings.

As Rei sharply looked around, he also took the Death Scythe out of the Misty Ring in case of a surprise attack by a monster.

「.....This seems to be okay.」
「Gururu~」

In the surrounding area, there were only young saplings covering the vacant land, in particular monsters hostile to Rei and Set could not be seen.

No, though there were monsters like Horned Rabbits for which there were G rank subjugation requests, they had all ran away at full speed from Set's overwhelming appearance.

「Now then, it seems there isn't anything to stop the absorption of magic

stones here.」

With that, he took the Orc meat and magic stones, for Set's meal, that he had gotten from the Orc subjugation without even glancing at the Misty Ring.

Chapter 44

「Gururu～」

Set gave a cry when Rei took out a magic stone from the Misty Ring.....not really, it was when he took out the meat of the high ranking Orc species.

After defeating the Orcs, their corpses had been immediately stored into the Misty Ring. Set had been looking at the meat while Elk had been helping with stripping materials and magic stones. Incidentally, Elk had cut down the meat to a nice size.

.....Of course, because they were busy with various things, Set didn't have an opportunity to eat the meat.

Though Orcs were tentatively classified as demi humans, it didn't really matter in this world.....no, in fact, because the higher ranking species of the D rank Orcs contained a lot more magic power than lower rank monsters on the market, it was a delicious dish. Rei was told that by Elk as well as a butcher in town.

「Here!」

It had been two days since they returned to the city from the Orc village. The food that Set had received at the inn and from adventurers and residents wasn't enough. Set caught the thrown Orc meat into his mouth skillfully and swallowed it.

(As for absorbing magic stones, I'll wait until Set finishes first.)

Watching Set eat the Orc meat with great gusto, even though he had eaten lunch at the Dusk Wheat, his stomach's hunger prevailed, cutting a branch from a tree, he stabbed some Orc meat on and stuck it into the ground.

Collecting dead wood from trees that fallen nearby, he used magic to start a fire and spit roasted the Orc skewers. He sprinkled some salt he had taken out from the Misty Ring onto the surface before bringing it to his mouth.

「It's certainly delicious.」

Orcs were D rank or higher and the meat contained magic power besidehaving rich taste. Because of that, he was able to fully enjoy the taste of the meat with just a simple salt seasoning.

「Guru~.....」

Until then, Set had been hungrily eating raw meat, but he had eaten cooked Water Bear meat at the campfire in the Forest of Monsters as well as the skewers in the city before. Because of this, Set gave an envious cry at Rei who was eating the Orc skewers, Rei gave a wry smile at this scene and spit roasted a share of skewers for Set.

「Guru~」

After eating the meat from several Orcs that came from the Misty Ring, Set gave a satisfied cry.

Rei took a break while stroking Set's head, feeling the wind flowing through the trees.

The scent of nature in the wind. If you listened carefully, you could hear the sounds of birds and insects or beasts and monsters. While listening to such sounds, Rei took out the magic stone of an Orc from the Misty Ring.

Though he had sold almost all of the magic stones at the guild, he set aside two of each for Set and the Death Scythe.

「.....Right. Break time's finished. Set, start absorbing the magic stone.」
「Guru~!」

Set also gave a happy cry at Rei's words, he understood that his own power would increase if he absorbed the magic stone.

「First of all is a magic stone of an ordinary Orc.Because a skill was learnt, even from an E rank goblin rare species, I think there may be a possibility..... Set!」

Calling out, he threw a magic stone towards Set.

Dexterously catching it in his beak, he swallowed it just like that.....the announcement message from when a skill was acquired did not occur, there didn't seem to be any changes in particular.

「Nothing happened, it seems.」

「Guru～」

Set gave a regretful cry.

Just to make sure, he brought up the list of Set's skills in his mind, as usual, there were only two, Fire Breath and Water Ball.

「What is the criteria for learning skills?」

While muttering, he threw out one of the remaining Orc magic stones into the air, striking in one blow with the Death Scythe.

Cutting it in two with the blade, though it disappeared like smoke.....the Death Scythe was also unable to acquire a skill.

「I just wasted 2 magic stones. Well, at the very least they were only magic stones of ordinary Orcs.」

While spitting out a sigh, next, he took out a magic stone of an Orc Archer from the Misty Ring.

「Set.」

Throwing the magic stone of the Orc Archer like the one from before, Set caught the magic stone in his mouth before swallowing it.

【Set has learnt the skill『Wind Arrow Lv.1』】

And an announcement message echoed in his mind.

「It seems something was learnt. Even then, Wind Arrow? When he thought of Set's skills, Fire Breath and Water Ball, it seems Wind Arrow was next.....well, perhaps it was a hobby of Takumu or something. More importantly, the Orc's magic stone was yellow. In other words, a earth attribute magic stone. Yet, a wind skill was acquired? Or was it because it was a magic stone of an Orc Archer? Set, try using Wind Arrow on that tree over there.」

「Guru~!」

Nodding at Rei's words, he looked at a tree located a bit further away as instructed. And.....

「Gururururu~!」

At Set's cry and thoughts, something invisible shot from Set at high speed, sharply cutting several places in the tree trunk.

However, the power wasn't very strong for a LV.1 skill, the depths of the cuts in the tree trunks were only a few cm deep. It didn't have the power to cut the tree trunk in half. Instead, it had a different use, its launch velocity was clearly faster compared to a water ball.

「Though it's power is lower than that of Water Ball and Fire Breath, Wind Arrow can be used in close combat because, as its name says, Wind Arrows are invisible.」

「Gururu~」

Set gave a happy cry at Rei's words. While giving a side look at that, Rei threw the remaining Orc Archer magic stone into the sky before cutting it in two like before. At that moment, the magic stone disappeared like smoke.....

【Death Scythe has acquired the skill『Flying Slash Lv.1』】

An announcement message echoed in his mind.

「Flying Slash, is it. Well, reading it, it's pretty self explanatory.」

Readying the Death Scythe, he aimed at the tree that Set had hit earlier with the wind arrow.

「Flying Slash!」

Invoking the skill while wielding the Death Scythe, the slash flew as according to the skill name.....hitting the tree.

At the point where the flying slash hit, the tree trunk was cut much deeper than Set's wind arrows. However, while more than one wind arrow could be shot at once, the disadvantage of the Flying Slash was that only one could be sent out.

「I see. Wind Arrow can fire more projectiles but the power of a single Flying Slash is higher. Well, next is the magic stones of the Orc Mages.」

Though it was a little different from what he had expected, Rei still nodded satisfied as he took an Orc Mage magic stone from the Misty Ring.

Similar to before, he allowed Set to absorb it.....

【Set has acquired the skill『Fire Breath Lv.2』】

An announcement message echoed in his mind.

「Hou~, Fire Breath Lv.2 is it. Set.」

「Gururu~!」

Set realised what Rei was asking and opened his beak towards the sky..... flames were spat out.

The flames spat out from his mouth were thicker compared to when it was Lv.1. They also traveled further. He could also see that the temperature of the flames was higher than before.

「Guru~?」

How was it? He turned to Rei and rubbed his face against him.

「Ah, as expected of Set. A good flame.」

Being praised while his head was scratched, Set gave a happy cry.

「Now then, next is the Death Scythe.」

Moving away from Set, he threw the magic stone of the Orc Mage into the air and struck it down with the Death Scythe.

In the same way up to now, the magic stone of the Orc Mage vanished like smoke after being cut in two.

【Death Scythe has acquired the skill『Magic Shield Lv.1』】

And an announcement message flowed through his mind.

However, Rei frowned his eyebrows slightly as he looked at the Death Scythe.

「That's it, is it?」

While thinking that in his head, he prepared the Death Scythe for a test.

「Magic Shield!」

At the same time Rei shouted, a shield of light appeared in front of Rei. When Rei saw it, he brandished the Death Scythe, hoping that it wouldn't interfere with the shield of light. As he brandished the Death Scythe, the shield of light automatically moved to not get in the way.

Confirming it's movement while brandishing the Death Scythe, he erased the magic shield after stopping.

「Automatically moving certainly isn't bad. But while it isn't bad.....」

While muttering, he turned his eyes to the Dragon Robe he was wearing.

The robe was made with the skin of dragons, naturally, it had a strong magic defense. Moreover, because dragon scales were placed in between the two layers of the robe, the average sword, spear and bow could not damage Rei's body through the Dragon Robe. However, though it could prevent damage to Rei, it couldn't prevent the shock from a heavy weapon such as an axe or hammer.

「.....Speaking of usefulness, is it in that sense? Magic Shield!」

Making a magic shield appear, he moved it in front of Set.

「Set, try to attack the Magic Shield.」

「Gururu~!」

Nodding at Rei's words, he swung down with his sharp claws at the Magic Shield!

Then, as the Magic Shield took the blow perfectly, it vanished into mist the next moment.

「.....Hm? Magic Shield! Set, one more time. This time with the Water Ball.」

「Guru~!」

To Rei's words, Set shot a water ball. Same as before, the magic shield blocked the attack before disappearing like mist.

「This is, so can it block a reasonably powerful attack? Set, next is Wind Arrow.」

「Gururu~!」

According to Rei's words, he shot a few wind arrows. Though it was able to block the first one like before, the magic shield disappeared the moment the attack was blocked, just like before. The remaining wind arrows cut through the grass that was behind the shield.

「I see, it can only block once but it can block a fairly powerful attack. At the

same time there are 3 methods of control, automatic, semi-automatic or manual. You can also cancel it just like before.」

A shield that would automatically defend him. Moreover, it had no weight. Unlike a shield, it wasn't necessary to keep it in his hand either. Though it had a big drawback of disappearing after blocking a single attack, taking advantage of his enormous magic power, Rei could just use Magic Shield again with no problems.

Dragon Robe and Magic Shield. It would be difficult to get through both defenses.

「Well, there's no skill that can't be used. Because it's different from corrosion and look like magic, there's no need to hide it. Next is the Orc General. Set.」

He threw out a magic stone as soon as he took it out of the Misty Ring. Set caught it in his beak and swallowed it.

While looking at that situation, the next step was to see what skill would be acquired, but.....

「.....What?」

The announcement message that a skill had been acquired did not come.

「What happen? Isn't it a magic stone of a rank C monster?」

As he muttered, an announcement could not be heard.

「Guru~.....」

Set also gave a disappointed cry.

While looking at the situation, Rei formed an idea in his mind.

(A skill wasn't acquired from the C rank Orc General. In comparison, a skill was acquired from magic stone of the goblin rare species. Could it be that the acquisition of skills isn't related to the rank or strength of the monster? In that case, what's the requirement for learning skills? Is it affinity? Well, in the end, I can't get back a magic stone that has been absorbed to try to acquire a skill..... no way, I didn't expect that a skill wouldn't be acquired from the magic stone of a C rank Orc General.No, wait. Then, would the Death Scythe also be unable to acquire skill from the magic stone of an Orc General?)

While having a bad feeling, he threw the magic stone of the Orc General into the air and struck it with the Death Scythe.

The magic stone was split in two as in the case with the other magic stones.

And the announcement.....didn't happen.

(I see. If Set can't learn a skill from a magic stone, then is it impossible for the Death Scythe as well? Well, both Set and the Death Scythe were made from my magic power using the Magic Beast Art.....no, I can't say that just because both were made by me.)

What's done is done, it can't be helped, letting out a deep sigh, he changed his mood.

「Though it's a shame that skills can't be acquired from the magic stones of Orc Generals.....but for the time being, the last one. The magic stone of the Orc King.」

He took out a large magic stone from the Misty Ring, it was one size larger than the magic stone of the Water Bear, which had been the largest magic stone he had seen until now.

The magic stone in his hand had the yellow, ground attribute, he held it, weighing up between Set and the Death Scythe. After a while, he gave a small nod and called out to Set.

「Set, you absorb the magic stone of the Orc King.」
「Guru~?」

Is that okay? Set seemed to say as gave a cry and tilted his head to the side.

Rei nodded while smiling at that.

「Ah. The Death Scythe already has Corrosion, Flying Slash and Magic Shield. Since I got a long distance magic attack that was my weak point, you should absorb the magic stone of the Orc King. Here.」

Here you go, Set caught the magic stone of the Orc King that was thrown in his beak and swallowed it, similar to before.

(If it's the magic stone of an Orc King, I think that it wouldn't be possible to not learn a skill, but.....)

As though Rei's wishes were heard, an announcement message flowed into his mind.

【Set has acquired the skill『King's Awe Lv.1』】

To the fact that Set acquired a skill, Rei let out a sigh of relief.

However, he immediately tilted his head in confusion.

「Set, what kind of skill is King's Awe?」

「Guru~!」

Yes. He wasn't able to judge its effect from the skill's name, the effect of King's Awe couldn't be predicted. Set understood the skill, unfortunately, he couldn't explain it as he couldn't speak words.

「Gururu~」

To provide evidence for Rei's thoughts, Set ran up into the sky, found a Horned Rabbit and landed on the ground in front of it.

「Pyi~!」

Surprised at the Griffon suddenly appearing in front of it, it tried to escape at full speed.....

「Gurururururu~!」

Set gave a loud cry, the speed of the Horned Rabbit fell slightly. And not missing the chance, Set killed it with his beak and sharp claws.

「.....I see.」

Rei muttered as he saw Set eating the Horned Rabbit that he had defeated.

Now he finally understood the effect of Set's King's Awe. As according to its name, it would intimidate enemies, inhibiting their movement. Though its effect on monsters at different ranks would have to be investigated properly, there was no doubt that it was a useful skill.

「As expected of the magic stone from the Orc King. Though I wanted to share it with the Death Scythe if it was possible.....I guess I'll wait for the next opportunity.」

After Rei finished acquiring and inspecting skills and Set had finished eating

the Horned Rabbit, they returned to the city of Gimuru.

【Set】

『Water Ball Lv.1』『Fire Breath Lv.2』new『Wind Arrow Lv.1』new『King's Awe Lv.1』new

【Death Scythe】

『Corrosion Lv.1』『Flying Slash Lv.1』new『Magic Shield Lv.1』new

Wind Arrow: Shoots 3~5 arrows of wind. Though it's power isn't high, its effect is that they are hard to see because the arrows are made of wind, the arrows also have the characteristic of flying fast.

Flying Slash: A skill that causes a slash to fly out. It's power is reasonably high, but only a single slash can be created at a time.

Magic Shield: Creates a shield of light, preventing a single enemy attack. It vanishes like mist after blocking a single attack. In addition, so as to not interfere with Rei, it will automatically move with him, it is also possible to move it manually with his consciousness.

King's Awe: For enemies weaker than yourself, their speed can be decreased by 10%. However, it has no effect if the enemies are at an equal or higher class.

Chapter 45

Early morning, the day after learning a large number of skills. The figure of Rei could be seen in the guild as usual. Set was already lying at his reserved location and gave happy cries as he was given food by adventurers going to the guild and passersby in the city.

「Set-chan, has become so popular in town.」

As Rei was looking at the request board, a person suddenly called out to him.

When Rei turned face the the voice, he saw the figure of Milein, the leader of Scorching Wind from the Orc subjugation force, who had fought the Orc King's group with him.

「Are you also looking for requests over here?」

「Requests.....as expected of Rei? Normally, after a large request, most would take a one week break.....」

While saying that, Milein's eyes glanced over the request forms that were attached to the board.

After looking at them, Milein turned her eyes back and gave a slightly embarrassed but bitter smile.

「Ahh, to tell the truth, our armour and weapons were damaged during the Orc subjugation.And not just mine, Excel and Sulunin's weapons and armour were also damaged. So, almost all of our rewards were spent repairing or buying replacements.Well, it's still a good opportunity as we were thinking of getting new weapons and armour. Because of that, we were looking at doing a new request as soon as possible. 」

Listening to Milein's words, Rei directed his gaze to her armour and the weapon at her waist.

Certainly, the equipment was different from the ones he had seen at the time of the Orc subjugation, if Milein's words were to be believed, they were of a higher quality than before.

A little bit further away, Excel and Sulunin could be seen looking at the request board like Milein. When they noticed Rei, Excel waved in greeting while Sulunin gave a polite nod.

And while returning the greeting to the two, Milein suddenly hugged Rei from behind.

「Hey, Rei. If you're looking for a request, why don't you do a quest together with us? Come on, Set-chanI mean, Rei's ability is dependable.」

Realising Milein's plan from her words, Rei gave a wry smile.

If you excluded Axe of the Thunder God, Milein was probably the first adventurer to befriend Set, at the same time, Milein was also one of Set's favourites.

However, Rei wasn't able to immediately agree to Milein's words.

After all, Rei primary and secondary purposes were the magic stones of monsters and the materials and rewards from them. And if he partied with other adventurers, if Rei wanted the magic stones, it was likely that there would be trouble. Basically, excluding some special exceptions, the magic stone was the most valuable part of the monster.

「Milein, you shouldn't be so unreasonable to others. Every person has their own circumstances.」

Seeing Rei's troubled face, Sulunin chided Milein.

「That's right. Though Milein likes Set a lot, you shouldn't be excessively unreasonable.」

「Muu~.....but you know.」

As Milein was chided by not just Sulunin but Excel as well, Rei found a certain request form.

The contents of the request was the investigation of another forest near the Forest of Magic, there was no rank requirement but it required 5 people.

(Should I accept this quest with Scorching Wind? Fortunately, as the Seed of Contract has been placed inside of them, even if I ask for the magic stones, they probably won't inquire much further about it.)

「Milein, what you think of taking this request together?」

「Huh? Really!? Which request?」

Milein looked at the request form at Rei's words, smiling ear to ear. However, her expression clouded immediately.

「Hmm, a forest investigation.....the reward is large for such a request. However, because not much is know about that place, hence the investigation, I don't know what kind of monsters will appear there. However, I want to be with Set, and there's also Rei's fighting power.....hmm.....what do Excel and Sulunin think?」

Milein asked her party members while staring at the request form.

In the first place, Scorching Wind was a rank C party while Rei was a rank E adventurer. Normally, they wouldn't be able to receive a quest together unless the request had no rank requirements, like the one Milein was looking at. Though technically speaking, Scorching Wind could receive a rank E request, to receive a low rank request with low rewards was pointless if they wanted to earn money.

As for requests that had no rank requirements, their rewards were often either extremely low or high with a matching risk. In this case, concerning the investigation into the forest near the Forest of Monsters, if anything, it was the latter kind as what monsters would appear was unknown.

The request to subjugate the Orc village, which Rei and Scorching Wind participated in, was also categorized in this group.

「I'm sorry but I would like to object. I have not yet become familiar with the cane I just bought and the degree of risk is unknown, I would like to refrain from this request.」

「That's true. I'm sorry Milein-san. I also haven't completely mastered the new bow I bought either.」

While looking apologetic, Milein let out a sigh at the two who were shaking the necks.

「Is that right. Well, if you say it can't be helped then it can't be helped. There's no helping it, we'll have to give up on it. I'm sorry Rei. It's impossible for

us.」

「No, I don't mind. Because I'm staying at the Dusk Wheat, Set is staying at the stables. You can play with him there if you have free time.」

「Yep, I'll visit for sure. Well, we're in the area. Unless we earnestly search for a good request, we won't be able to pay the rent for the inn.」

Milein let out a regretful sigh and went to the rank C request board with Sulunin and Excel.

Seeing their backs off, he started looking for a good request for himself..... while he was thinking about it, he again noticed someone approaching him.

If you saw him approach while obviously looking at Rei, anyone would understand that he was looking for Rei.

He was in his late teens to early twenties. For an adventurer, the equipment he was wearing wasn't particularly high quality. However, the sword equipped at his waist was different, it was something that attracted a lot of looks.

(A Magic sword, is it?)

It was like the battle axe which Vargas from the Claws of the Hawk had or the great sword that the Orc King used. They were all weapons with hidden magic power. In other words, a magic item. Because of the magic power they contained, they tended to attract looks from the public eye, that was why even Rei, who couldn't sense foreign magic power, could tell if it was a magic item.

As for the sword at the waist of the man approaching him, the sword gave off an atmosphere of a magic item, that was why he was able to judge that it was a magic sword.

「You are Rei, right?」

Rei gave a small nod as the man stopped in front of Rei and asked.

「Ah. And you are?」

「I'm Arogan. A rank E adventurer.」

Rank E adventurer. In other words, he was at the same rank as Rei.

However, Rei was a rookie who had just become rank E the day before.

「So, Arogan, do you need me for something?」

「Ah. I had gone out of the city of Gimuru for a request, though I came back this morning.....and I heard a strange rumor here and there.」

「Strange rumor?」

「An impossibly crazy rumor that a G rank adventurer defeated an Orc King.」

You don't believe it? As Rei looked back, saying so with his face, it was clear that he didn't believe Rei, the adventurer in the rumor, had defeated the Orc King.

(Jealousy, is it? Well, either way, he's not a decent opponent for me.)

Muttering in his mind, he let out an unnatural sigh.

「Hey, what's with the sigh?」

「So, how can I help you?」

Being ignored and asked what he wanted, the blood rushed to his head.

But though the blood rushed to Arogan's head, after clicking his tongue as if he didn't care, he started to speak.

「What, it's simple. I want you to have a match with me. I want to see your ability that defeated the Orc King.」

In other words, he wanted what Rei was expecting. Rei turned his eyes to the counter for a moment.

Although she wanted to stop it, because Lenora had been ordered to report to her boss if Rei got tangled up with someone, she had already left to carry out her job to report to her boss and couldn't be seen. Instead, maybe as compensation, Kenny half scowled with eyes of anger at Arogan who was messing with her favourite, Rei.

「And what benefits will I receive from this match?」

「Huh?」

What are you saying? Arogan's face seemed to say as he looked at Rei.

Arogan had planned to pick a fight and provoke Rei into an unconditional fight, however the plan had simply failed.

「Hey, hey, is that kid serious? Picking a fight with Rei even though he's still E rank.」

「.....From what I've heard, did he say Arogan? That fellow wasn't in the city of Gimuru for a while. There's nothing that can be done, it can't be helped.」
「Ah well.....not knowing anything about Rei but picking a fight with him. At any rate, he does look small and has a delicate appearance.」

Though the noise of adventurers speaking in low voices echoed through the guild, Arogan was staring at Rei and didn't hear any of it.

In the eyes of the adventurers, Arogan was like some sort of hero. However, he was a hero in the sense that he was like a brave man attacking a dragon with a club.

Anyhow, Rei had scored a decisive victory against the D rank party Claws of the Hawk by himself on the first day after registering with the guild. Because he took away all their money and equipment that they had on hand, even if it was unpleasant, his behaviour stood out. Because the Claws of the Hawk were still spending each day busily to return their debt, they looked sympathetically at the unlucky adventurer who had encountered the seemingly frail and weak Rei.

And, as the surrounding people saw a while ago, the young man was on good terms with the rank C party Scorching Wind, which had begun to distinguish itself as a party. It should be noted that he also had an association with the A rank party Axe of the Thunder God.And above all, most adventurers in the guild were reminded of the figure of the Griffon outside the guild.

Rank A monster, Griffon. Fighting against Rei automatically meant making an enemy out of the reaper of the sky.

But, only just returning to town and hearing the rumor, Arogan went straight to Rei without understanding anything. Anyway, he judged that Rei had just gone up to rank E because of an influential person while he himself was at the stage where he would soon be taking the rank up test to rank D.

In a sense, it could be said that this was one of the prices of fame.

「Anyway, you should fight me. That way, I can properly assess your ability. Or what is it? If you can defeat an Orc King, don't you have the confidence to fight an E rank adventurer like me?」

(I see. He's a type similar to Seryl from Dark Night's Star.)

Believing only what they wanted to believe in, that was the only reality visible to them.

The only difference was that he hadn't been completely corrupted by it. If he hit him where he was most overconfident in, Rei judged that Arogan wouldn't make the same mistake as Seryl did.

(But then, I don't really need to do that either.....)

「I'm trying to say, whether I can beat you or not is a different thing. I'm asking you to show me the benefits of having a match against you.」

「.....That's, then what do you want?」

「Ha? What are you talking about? You want to fight me? What if you can't pay the price?」

「Guh,.....b-but it's only to check your skills.....all right. If you beat me, I'll give you 3 silver coins. How about that?」

「.....Well, that's fine. It will be troublesome if we make any more noise here. So, where do you want to do it?」

As it would be stupid to continue it any further, he prompted the other party to go ahead.

Finally hearing that Rei had brought himself to fight him, he turned his eyes to the guild door, full of confidence.

「It won't take too much time or effort. We'll finish it outside the guild.」

Saying that, Arogan started walking towards the outside of the guild. Spitting out a sigh, Rei followed and went through the door to the outside.

「Now, ready your weapon.」

Arogan nimbly took out the magic sword at his waist from its sheath and pointed it at Rei.

Rei also took out the Death Scythe from the Misty Ring and readied it.

Passersby gathered around curiously, Arogan's aim to embarrass Rei in front of this crowd was obvious.However, because some people had heard of a similar exchange where the Claws of the Hawk had disgraced themselves, the looks that Arogan was expecting were directed at him instead of Rei.

In addition, as for Set who had seen Rei come out, he stood up to look at the commotion before Rei stopped him with his eyes. Set closed his eyes and went back to sleep

「I see, that's the item box from the rumors.」

Hearing Rei had an item box from the rumors, he turned his eyes to the Misty Ring that was on Rei's right arm and licked his lips.

While ignoring that, Rei observed the sword that Arogan had.

(As expected, his excessive confidence is thanks to his magic sword. I don't think that it's a magic sword that a rank E adventurer should have.....where did he obtain it.)

As for the magic sword that Arogan had, a red pattern rose up from the black sword blade. As for the power of the blade, one could feel that the magic sword had a considerable hidden power.

「Here I come!」

Giving a short cry, Arogan kicked the ground and swung down his magic sword.

However, the speed at which the sword was handled was slow.....no, it was too the extent it could be called sluggish.

It wasn't skillful and had no strength.

It was certainly powerful enough if you considered an E rank adventurer. However, compared to the time Rei fought with the Orc King, who had a similar magic great sword, it was an attack he could easily evade while yawning.

Lightly taking a step back, he swept the Death Scythe from below, catching the tip of Arogan's magic sword that passed right in front of his eyes. At the same time, he caught the sword blade in his blade.....and threw it into the sky!

Arogan's magic sword and the Death Scythe made a kin~ sound as they came in contact. The next moment, Aragon's sword flew high into the sky. It drew an arc while spinning wildly before piercing into the ground near Aragon.

As for the people that were speaking, the surroundings, including Arogan, were silent.

Rei stored the Death Scythe back into the Misty Ring as he looked at the surroundings before calling out to Arogan.

「No matter if the weapon is first class, the wielder is only third class.....」

Rei's voice resounded not only to Arogan but also to the curious spectators in the surroundings.

Chapter 46

It had been 5 days since the fight against Arogan.....or rather the farcical show. In the afternoon on this day, Rei could be seen in the meeting room on the 2nd floor of the guild.

Yes, the meeting room where Hobbes had given the description of the Orc subjugation force.

Other than Rei, the figures of 5 other adventurers could be seen in the meeting room. A total of 6 people, including Rei. These were the people taking the rank up test to rank D.

In addition, among them, the figure of Arogan could be seen, his original plan of spreading his name had been carried out in the opposite meaning after the farce with Rei. The moment their eyes met, as Rei walked into the meeting room, if you observed Arogan's expression as he quickly glanced away, you could understand his feelings about Rei.

(The rank up test, is it?)

The day before, Lenora, who could be said to be in charge of Rei, had called out to him as he entered the guild. He recalled the conversation he had with Lenora at that time.

『Ah, Rei-san. About the rank up test, because it will start tomorrow, please come to the meeting room in the early afternoon tomorrow.』

『.....That's awfully sudden. Can't you inform us in advance normally?』

『Well, you're certainly right. However, in the end, this part of the adventurer rank up test. For urgent and emergency requests, as there would be no time, would you be able to ask for them to wait a little longer?』

『Indeed, that's certainly true. So tomorrow afternoon?』

『Yes. Registering with the guild and taking the rank up test in under a month, this is the fastest time recorded in the city of Gimuru. Please do your best.』

While recalling such a conversation, he turned his eyes to the other people who were also taking the rank up test.

First of all, needless to say, was Arogan. Nevertheless, even if he disgraced himself in that event the other day and was a rotten person, he had a magic sword at rank E. His personal skill aside, since he had a considerably high quality magic sword, he liked to fight by pushing forward with raw power.

2nd person. It was a woman who had her hair cut short to allow easy movement. As with her hair, she wore leather armour, made from the skin of some monster, so as to not obstruct her body's movements. She had two daggers at her waist. She might be a thief, who's job was to scout ahead and handle traps. Her age looked to be in her late teens.

3rd person. Wearing a robe on his body, similar to Rei, he held a cane in his hand. This man was a typical magician and had a plain face. As Rei was looking around, the man smiled at him before continuing to talk with the previous woman, who was sitting next to him. He was probably acquainted with the her. His age also looked to be in his late teens.

4th person. It was a male warrior who had a sharp gaze. His equipment was overwhelmingly inferior when compared to Arogan's magic sword, it was a common long sword that could be bought in the city. However, Rei felt that his ability as a warrior was better than Arogan's. His age was similar to Arogan's, probably in his early twenties.

5th person. Sitting on a chair was a woman with her eyes closed. If anything, it could be said that she had decent features. What should be mentioned specially were her ears. She had ears with a much sharper point compared with ordinary humans, that showed that the woman was an elf. Seeing the the large bow placed on the table in front of her, she was probably an archer. She appeared to be in her late teens.

(Then there's me, it seems. I wonder what kind of test will be held.)

While thinking about that, his eyes coincidentally met those of the female thief.

『.....』

They stared at each other in silence for a few seconds. In the end, the female thief's patience ran out and she spoke out.

「Do you have any business with me?」

「No, nothing in particular.」

「But you were staring at me just now. So what do you want? Or what, are you trying to hit on me right now?」

「Wai-, Culotte. Suddenly picking a fight. Umm, I'm sorry. Because Culotte is taking the rank up exam for the first time, she's a bit tense. Please don't mind it.」

The male mage who was sitting next to Culotte, the female thief, bowed his head as he apologised for her.

「Scola, why are you lowering your head. This is a bad fellow. Staring at people indecently.」

「Ah, come on. I'm sorry. I'm really sorry about this. I'm sorry.....I mean, usually she isn't this stubborn.....」

「Don't worry about it. I don't really care about it at all.」

「What, is my worth to you.....」

「It's noisy.」

In the room with Culottes noisy cries, a voice suddenly sounded. Aside from Rei, who had felt a person coming towards the meeting room, the others reflectively turned their eyes to the voice.

A man in his mid forties could be seen. However, with his trained body, it would be fair to say he was comparable to an active adventurer.

「Hey, I will begin the explanation of the rank up test. Are you all ready to listen?」

(.....I should have seen his face somewhere. If I'm not mistaken.....ahh, it was during the dispute with Goblin Drool.)

That was right, it was the person who had determined Rei had enough fighting strength to get to rank G after the dispute with Claws of the Hawk, it was Gran.

While remembering his face, Rei turned towards Gran, ignoring Culotte.

Culotte probably also realised who Gran was. She scowled at Rei for an moment before finally turning her eyes towards Gran.

In addition, Scola turned to Gran after giving Rei another apologetic bow.

「Now then, it seems that everyone is ready to listen. Then I'll begin the explanation of the rank up test to rank D immediately. First of all, I'll have you fight each other.」

The moment Gran said that, Arogon who had watched Rei's exchange with Culotte indifferently, looked at Rei, startled.

It had only been 5 days since he had been reminded of the difference in fighting strength. The colour slowly drained from his face, if he had to fight Rei, he had no chance of winning.

However, Gran continued to talk as if to reassure Arogon.

「That said, you won't be disqualified immediately just because you lose the fight.Well, I won't deny that it will be referred to during the assessment. The main purpose of fighting each other is to learn each others abilities. So, for the compulsory part of the rank up test, you will have to clear a bandit hideout about 2 days from here. The bandit subjugation is the trial for the rank up test.」

Subjugating bandits, after that was said, the meeting room fell dead silent.

Because everyone was here to take the rank up quest to rank D, they had more or less only received requests up to E rank. Though tentatively speaking, it was possible to receive a request one rank higher, hearing of the barrier between rank's E and D from senior adventurers, there were very few adventurers who would take rank D requests at rank E.

Because of that, there were less requests at rank E and more at rank D. There was also a clear difference when the target of a subjugation request were humans, such as bandits.

In this world, fighting monsters was a daily occurrence. However, there were still a lot of people opposed to the act of killing a person. Therefore, the type of request for subjugating bandits and the rewards from it were normally higher than rank D.

「Although everyone here seems to know the circumstances, a request to subjugate bandits or act as escorts to merchants and travelers is rarely D rank and is usually higher. In these types of requests, if you hesitate to kill the enemy

in a dangerous situation, your companions or the people you are escorting might be killed, that's the worst thing that could happen. The former is still better, in the latter case, there will be an issue relating to the trust of the whole adventurers guild. That's why, the rank up test to rank D is basically asking you to kill people.」

Only Gran's words could be heard in the meeting room, the people taking the rank up tests, listened quietly.

However, among them, Rei wasn't as strained. After all, He had killed the 4 members of Dark Night's Star with his own hands during the Orc subjugation request. Though it wasn't that he wanted to kill a people willingly, he had no weakness such as hesitating in an emergency.

There was also one other person.

(Him as well, it seems.)

It was the warrior other than Arogan, whom Rei had glanced at earlier. Though he was concentrating on listening to Gran's words, he didn't have the feeling of being tense like the others. With just that, Rei more or less understood that he probably had a similar experience in killing people.

「Now then, that's all the information. Then I'll have you fight each other at once. Since you have come to take the rank up test, I assume you've naturally brought the weapons you use? Follow me.」

Saying that, Gran left the meeting room. Rei followed next.

「Listen up, because there's a training ground at the back of the guild, you will fight there.」

「Training ground?」

To Rei's unintentional words, Culotte looked at him with an amazed face.

「I'm shocked. Didn't you know there was a training ground at the back of the guild. And you managed to get to rank E.」

「Ahh, come one. Why do you keep lashing out at him. I'm sorry, I'll be glad if you don't mind Culotte's words.」

「Don't worry about it.」

He thought about the training ground while a wry smile floated onto his face at the combination of the pair.

(Goblin Drool and Arogan, when they fought me, why didn't they use the training ground and fought with me in front of the guild insted.Ah, I see. They wanted to defeat me in front of a crowd of spectators.)

While understanding somewhat, he followed Gran to the first floor of the guild. As Kenny saw the figure of Rei, she gave a small wave. As a wry smile floated onto his face at the scene of Lenora admonishing Kenny, he stepped out the back door of the guild.

Continuing walking for a few minutes, the training ground Gran mentioned could be seen.

That said, it didn't mean that there was particularly high quality equipment. It was just a wide space surrounded by a fence, there wasn't even a roof.

The training ground had a considerable size, it was at the size where a simulation battle between knights could be carried out. Currently, there were about 10 people scattered around, training in the training ground.

「Hm? Hey, what's that group over there?」

「Ah, you know. With Gran leading rookies, it's probably the rank up test.」

「Ahh, I see.」

The voices of the adventurers who were exchanging blows with sword and spear could be heard by Rei. Maybe the other people were also interested in the training, all their eyes were focused on the people following Gran.

Whether or not Gran noticed those looks, he moved to the center of the training ground.

However, there was no wonder. It was like this at every rank up test. After all, if they could add a promising rookie to their parties, the possibility of surviving a dangerous request would increase. The number of parties who wanted rookies, who were like uncut gems, were endless.

「Hey now, you lot. Don't get distracted by all the looks around you. Even though I said the results of the mock battle won't be directly linked to the results of the test, it doesn't change the fact that they will be referred to. First

of all, introduce yourselves. First, your name, then your occupation, then all the skills you have that you want to make known. First, starting from you.」

The person who Gran pointed out, or should it be said arranged before hand, was Rei.

To Gran's grin, Rei gave a wry smile and started to speak.

「I'm Rei. My occupation is a magic warrior. My weapon is.....」

He took the Death Scythe out of the Misty Ring and swung it. Just one swing. With just that, all eyes were glued to Rei and the Death Scythe.

「This large scythe, the Death Scythe. I am also proficient in fire magic.Also with respect to taming?」

Should he talk about Set here? Indirectly asking Gran, Gran replied with a small nod.

「I've also tamed a monster. Though I think some of you may already know, it's the Griffon that's lying down in the carriage waiting area at the guild.」

「Wai-! So you're the one that killed the Orc King!?!」

Griffon, realising who Rei was at those words, Culotte unintentionally cried out.

「Hey, killing the Orc King, surely.....」

「Ah, that's right. Though there certainly was a story that an adventurer called Rei had killed the Orc King, I heard he was at G rank.」

「In that case, he went up from G rank to E rank for his achievement of defeating the Orc King, then to the rank up test for D rank?」

Voices could be heard from the surroundings here and there including all the rank up test participants, except for Arogan.

「Hey, quiet down, the rest of the self introductions still haven't finished. Next, you.」

Clapping his hands with a pam~ pam~ sound, Gran caught everyone's attention before pointing to the next person. It was Culotte, the female thief.

Culotte, who was looking at Rei, shocked, pulled herself back together after Scola gave her a slap on the back.

「I'm Culotte. My occupation is thief. My main weapons, as you can see, are daggers. As for my skills, well.....I'm good at scouting and placing traps.」
「I see, a thief, is it. You'll be playing an active part in this test in various ways. Next.」

Next was Scola, who was beside Culotte.

「I'm Scola. My occupation is a mage, there are no weapons I'm particularly proficient at. As for magic, I can use water, wind and healing magic.」

He finished the self introduction somewhat tensely because of the observation from not only the rank up test participants but also the other adventurers.

Gran turned his eyes to Scola with admiration after his self introduction.

「Hou~, you can use healing magic in addition to attack magic. Your future is quite promising.」

A mage. Normally, one strong in attack magic would be weak in healing magic, vice versa, one strong in healing magic would normally be weak in attack magic. Therefore, mages like Scola who were proficient in both attack and healing magic were small in number. It wasn't an exaggeration to call them a rare existence among mages.

「Our party has been keeping an eye on him.」

「Hey, are you trying to steal a march?」

「Like they say, first come, first serve.」

Hearing such voices, he was glad to hear himself being evaluated as such. Scola looked down with a smile, his cheeks red in embarrassment.

「Next.」

Next to be called out was Arogan. Worried at Rei's glance, he pretended not to mind it before speaking up.

「I'm Arogan. A warrior. My weapon is this magic sword. I'm confident in my skill with regard to direct attack power.」

「A magic sword at rank E, moreover, it seems to be quite powerful.If it can be mastered, its power would be phenomenal.」

Maybe he knew about the dispute with Rei that had happened a few days ago, Gran indirectly hinted that it was currently a useless treasure before looking at the next person.

Hearing those words, Arogon fell silent and frowned his eyebrows slightly without retorting.

「Next.」

The next person was the male warrior with sharp eyes who seemed to be the only person aside from Rei who had experience in killing people.

「Supervia, swordsman. My weapon had no particular background, unlike the one Arogon showed previously. It's a long sword. I have no particular skills aside from my ability as a swordsman.」

「.....I see. There seems to be no issues with your weapon. Next.」

For an instant, Gran seemed to see right through Supervia's weapon, before directing his gaze to the last person.

The female elf carrying the large bow gave a small nod at Gran's glance before starting to speak.

「I'm Firuma Patron. My main weapon is a bow. My occupation is ranger, or spirit mage. As for skills, I can use spirit magic to some extent, as I said before.」

At her words, the training camp became noisy again. That was a matter of course. Not only was it a beautiful elf, who usually stayed in forests and wouldn't go out to cities, she could also use spirit magic.

Elves, it was known that from children to the elders, they were masters of the bow. In addition, because they had a greater magic power than most humans, they were superior as mages. As for those that could master both, they were rare. Their scarcity was similar to mages who could use both attack and healing magic, as said before.

And, Firuma Patron. The fact that she had a surname showed that she was one of the elves that had left their homes.

As for Gran, he had a grin after hearing Firuma's self introduction.

「Hou~. Though it's already rare to see an Elf, to be able to use both the bow

and spirit magic. Then there's Rei and Scola, this time's harvest is pretty good.」

Muttering, he glanced at the test participants who had completed their self introductions.

「Well, a simple self introduction is good enough. The next step is to get to know each other's respective abilities in a mock battle. Anyway, you guys will have to subjugate bandits by yourselves. It's better to experience each other's strength yourselves. First round.....Rei and Supervia.」

Gran spoke out, selecting Rei and Supervia.

Chapter 47

The training ground at the back of the guild. Opposite Rei was Supervia, another test participant who was taking the same rank up test.

As usual, the Death Scythe was in Rei's hands. In Supervia's hands, he was holding a long sword.

「I'll say this first, in the end, this is a mock battle. The aim is to examine each other in the open and know their abilities, the real rank up test is subjugating bandits. Don't get too heated about it.」

Rei, Supervia and everyone else who was there nodded at Gran's words.

「Are there any questions?」

Rei spoke up and asked Gran.

「Though I have my combat style, my main battle style is in combination with Set.....is it not possible?」

「Of course. If you brought your Griffon to rank D's and rank E's, it won't be a match anymore. It's prohibited. For your information, during the bandit subjugation, you're prohibited from using your Griffon. Even if you said that taming is one of your skills, can you always have the Griffon at your side? The test you are in right now is strictly to test your own strength.」

「Ah, taming is my power too.....but I guess I understand.」

Naturally, he nodded at Gran before spitting out a sigh. He readied the Death Scythe against Supervia, opposite him.

Rei felt lucky that he was able to receive such advice and observed his opponent without minding what he had been told.

(.....Heh~)

He voiced his admiration in his mind as he faced Supervia, who had his weapon poised.

It was because his posture with the sword was excellent. Of course, there were various flaws compared to Milein, who he had worked with in the Orc

subjugation force. Still, he looked to be a lot more skilled than Arogan, who relied on the raw attack power of his magic sword.

Similarly, Supervia raised his caution as he confirmed the position Rei had set the Death Scythe in.

(Though he introduced himself as a magic warrior.....if anything, he probably leans towards the warrior side. He is also considerably skilled. Watching like this, I can't find a gap. However, his weapon is a large scythe. With it's length, if can get right up to him, it will be hard for him to cope. Then!)

「Haaaa!」

Raising a voice with fighting spirit, he kicked against the ground and at his fastest speed, dived towards Rei's chest.

(I'll strike the first blow at his chest. If I do that, I have a chance of winning.)

Thinking that for an instant in his heart, he concentrated his consciousness on the assessing initial movement of the huge scythe as Rei began to move the Death Scythe.

「Here!」

The moment Supervia entered Rei's range, he tried to parry the scythe with a sweep of his long sword, but.....

Catching part of the Death Scythe, trying to parry it.....Supervia was blown away together with his long sword by the overwhelming weight behind the single blow from the Death Scythe.

「Gaah~!」

Flying through the air for nearly 10m, he finally stopped his movements after bouncing several times along the ground.

His entire body felt like it was hit by a hammer. Inside the training ground, it was dead silent.

「Guh, damn.....what's with that attack.....」

Still, he was someone taking the rank up test. Supervia used his sword to support him as he staggered up, his feet unsteady from the attack. He turned

towards Rei.

Rei looked with surprise at this situation.

「Heh, he can still stand after that attack. That's a little unexpected. I was surprised for a moment.Do you still want to continue?」

「Of course.....ha!」

While staggering on his feet and losing his balance, he tried to gather that momentum to charge again.....

「That's enough!」

Gran's voice stopped Supervia's movements.

「Examiner, I can still continue.」

「While staggering on your feet? I said it before, in the end, this is a mock battle to find out the power of your companions for the bandit subjugation.」

「.....I understand.」

Spitting out a deep sigh, Supervia dragged his still unsteady legs to his original position.

Rei saw that as well and moved to a place a bit further from Supervia

「.....Hey, was I imagining things? That person seemed to have been blown away」

「No, it's not a dream. It's reality. Look, see over there. There are furrows left on the ground.」

「That's right. Looking from a spectators viewpoint, that scythe is huge, it must have a considerable weight and a destructive power. However, that Rei is small and slender. With such a physique, how can he have that much power. I mean, is his rank E a lie?」

「Well, I did expect that.」

「Expect?」

「Ahh. Think about it. Didn't that guy defeat the Orc King, a rank B monster? For a ordinary E rank.....no, at that time he was rank G. Anyway, it's impossible for a low rank adventurer to defeat an Orc King.」

「Ah, well, if you say it like that then certainly.....even then, the high quality of his weapon aside, his skill is also top class, his physical strength is top grade as

well. Adding to that, he's accompanied by a rank A monster, Griffon. At the same time, he can use fire magic.If you can add him into a party, his combat power would be life saving.....」

An adventurer with a sword muttered involuntarily while watching Rei.

However, the adventurer with the spear shook his head from side to side.

「Certainly, there's no doubt that he's a top grade adventurer if you look at just his combat power, but they say his character is equally strong.」

「Character is strong?」

「Ahh. A typical example is his dispute with the Claws of the Hawk at the guild on his first day after registering.」

「That reminds me.....」

「His combat strength maybe high, but he's the type that won't follow the instructions of the party leader unless he's convinced by it.」

While listening to such a conversation, Gran, who had overseen the fight against the Claws of the Hawk, called out.

「Next, Arogan and Culotte. Step out.」

「Tch, a woman.」

「Hey, wait, what about a woman! Don't take it so lightly. I may not look like it but even I have the ability to take the rank up test.」

Culotte snapped back at Arogan who was muttering. Gran gave a sigh while looking amazed at the two people.

「Arogan, ability is what is needed to be an adventurer. Not gender. Culotte, you as well. Even in the meeting room, you were hounding Rei. At the very least, if you want to be a D rank adventurer, a lack of coordination is an issue.」

「.....Hmph.」

「Sorry about that.」

Arogan gave a scornful hmph at Gran while Culotte apologised obediently. In that way, Arogan readied his magic sword and Culotte readied her daggers as they faced each other.

「Though I've already said this to Supervia, this is a mock battle to see each other's strengths. Don't get too heated.Begin!」

Along with the signal to start, Culotte moved her body forward quickly, a method particular to thieves.

In order to meet it, Arogan pulled his magic sword from it's sheath.

Before the start of the mock battle, Arogan had taken that attitude to fool Culotte, there was no carelessness in his eyes. No, instead, he was observing Culotte's movements rather seriously.

「Haah!」

From the self introduction, Culotte had heard that Arogan's sword was a fairly high level magic sword, in the fight, the full power of the sword was displayed.No, he tried to display.

Along with a sharp cry, the tip of the dagger was thrust out. According to Culottes aim, Arogan would not be able to deal with the dagger thrust at his neck and she would win.

However, the tip of the dagger never reach the figure of Arogan. Maybe he had read Culotte's aim or maybe it was an intuitive judgement. Arogan sharply kicked against the ground and jumped backwards. Kicking against the ground the moment after Culotte's attack, he slipped around to Culotte's side and held his magic sword close to her neck.

Seeing the glossy black blade held close to her neck, Culotte instinctively held her breath.

「That's enough. The winner is Arogan!」

Gran's voice echoed into the surroundings, when Arogan heard it, he released his sword from Culotte's neck and sheathed it.

Culotte, who's confidence had been lost at her instant defeat, went back next to Scola while repressing her vexation.

Though Arogan was going to move back, he stopped at Gran's words.

「Is the effect of the magic sword physical reinforcement?」

「Well, something like that.」

「I see, then I take back the words I said earlier. It can be said you have sufficient mastery of the magic sword.」

「.....But, I was snubbed by him.」

Arogan muttered in this mouth as he looked in Rei's direction.

A few days ago during Rei and Arogan's fight. At that time, though he had strengthened his physical ability using the magic sword like just before, his weapon was unceremoniously knocked away. As for the fight just now, he had confidence in his own power, his heartbeat increased as he felt proud about it. Yes, against people like Culottes for example, who was in his line of sight.

「In the first place, that fellow is so out of standard that it's strange for him to be in rank E, you don't need to worry about it.Well, that's fine. Go back.」

At Gran's words, he glanced at Rei for a moment before immediately looking away and moving back to his original position.

And while looking at Arogan's back, the two adventurers with the sword and spear discussed their impressions of the fight.

「How do view that fight?」

「Well, about that. Should I say, it couldn't be helped? In the first place, isn't that girl a thief? Asking a thief to fight a warrior head on is just unreasonable. He even had a magic sword.」

「Ah well. A warrior's job is to fight, a thief's job is to scout and clear traps, if it can't be helped, it can't be helped.」

「But, if she can pass the rank up test, she will receive an intense number of invitations as a thief.」

「Ah.」

Warrior and thief. When registering with the guild, an overwhelming number were warriors, thieves had fewer numbers.

After all, the thief occupation required a lot more specialised techniques compared with the warrior. And unlike the warrior, who was active in combat, there were fewer opportunities to be recognised. Therefore, the number of people aiming to be a thief adventurer was rare, although not to the same degree as mages.

「Now then, then next is the last mock battle. Scola and Firuma. Step out. Ah, Firuma will fight purely using magic without the bow this time.」

「I will do my best.」

「Spirit magic only?Well, it can't be helped.」

To Gran's voice, Scola and Firuma came forward in front of everyone. Scola showed his will to win on his naive face. Firuma barely showed any change in her facial expression as she put the bow and quiver in her hands onto the ground.

Though the two people were facing each other like this, Scola spoke up before Gran gave the signal to start.

「Hey. To use spirit magic, don't you need a magic casting tool?」

Looking at his cane, Scola called out to Firuma.

To Scola's words, Firuma nodded her head with a small smile.

「Yes. However, it is not necessary to use a magic casting tool to use spirit magic. There is no problem as long as you can communicate with the spirits and befriend them.」

「Heh, that's convenient. That's nice.....can I also use it?」

「I wonder. If you can see spirits, hearing from a story, you might be able to befriend them.」

「That's enough talk. Though I've told you all already, this is a mock battle to examine each other's abilities, don't get too heated.Then, begin!」

At the same time as Gran's signal, Scola began chanting a spell while pointing his cane at Firuma.

Similarly, Firuma also called on the spirits she had befriended.

『Wind, turn into an unseen arrow to pierce those before me.』

Scola's incantation warped the world and an invisible arrow was created before his eyes.

『Wind Arrow!』

At the same time the magic was completed, several arrows were fired. The invisible arrows from the spell darted toward Firuma. However.....

『Wind spirits, shield me.』

From the few words that Firuma spoke, the spirits of the wind responded by creating a barrier of wind around Firuma.

The wind arrow's speed increased as they drilled into the barrier, trying to pierce it. After a few seconds of struggle, the wind barrier won out and the wind arrows shattered.

『Spirits of the land, break his steps.』

As soon as the wind barrier disappeared, Firuma spoke again. But rather than the spirits of the wind, she called out to the spirits of the land.

「-!?」

Scola heard that and immediately sprung back. The next moment the ground where Scola was standing sunk down by several cm.

While seeing that, he once again jumped back toward Firuma while pointing his cane and casting a spell.

『Water, turn into a whip to strike my enemies!』

According to his incantation, the water at Scola's hand formed into a whip.

『Water Whip!』

With the completion of the spell, the water whip was raised.....and swung down!

However, Firuma evaded the whip's attack with a light movement specific to elves and advanced forwards, reducing the distance to Scola.

『Spirits of the wind, spirit of the land. Bind him.』

「.....Eh?」

Though Scola tried to swing the whip down as Firuma came close, he suddenly noticed that dirt was wrapped around his feet, at the same time, his body's movements were restricted by wind.

And the moment he realised his difficult situation and tried to do something about the dirt and wind, the figure of Firuma was already in front of his eyes with a palm directed at Scola.

「That's enough! The winner is Firuma!」

Gran's voice echoed through the training field at the same time, all the mock battles had been completed.

Chapter 48

「Now then, you should have a rough understanding of each other's abilities.」

Gran told the rank up test participants who were standing in the training field in front of him.

As for the people who heard it, some gave a small nod, others smiled and some listened to Gran's words in frustration.

「Though I've said it many times, these mock battles are simply for you to know each other's strengths for the bandit subjugation. You shouldn't be too concerned about it. So, the next decision is who will be the leader of this temporary party.....」

Muttering, Gran looked at the 6 faces one after the other. With each person wanting to be the leader, they held their breaths waiting to see who would be nominated. Meanwhile, Gran's fixed his eyes on a certain person.

「Rei, you are now the leader.」

And he was told so.

「What? Me?」

Rei put on a surprised face at Gran's words. However, Gran nodded to that question without any hesitation.

「Ah. To be blunt, the level of your fighting strength can't be called D rank at all. Anyhow, you have the ability to defeat an Orc King. However, in your case, in the end, you're only an individual with high combat power, it has become a necessity for you to act alone. Though it might still be okay at E rank, every now and then at D rank, it will become necessary to work with other people in a group. Because of that, for people like you who are bad at social interaction, you have to do something about it to rank up. At the very least, you have to be able to have a minimum level of communication.」

As Gran pointed out his reasoning with his words, Rei could only keep his silence. He was aware that he wasn't that good at dealing with other people.

And if it was said that it was a requirement to rank up, Rei did not have the choice of not taking on the responsibility of a leader.

「I understand. I'll assume the role of the leader.」

「I hope you all are ready. Rei will be the leader of the temporary party until the bandit subjugation for the rank up test is completed.」

At Gran's words, everyone gave a nod.

.....However, each of them had a different facial expression.

「Right, well then, I'll give you the details of the bandit subjugation immediately. First of all, I've explained that the bandit hideout is about 2 days distance from the city of Gimuru. I will guide you there. I mean, as I'm the examiner, I have to follow you anyway. We will depart tomorrow morning. We will meet at the front gate at the 9 o'clock bell. The guild will provide a carriage for travel. Any questions?」

At Gran's words, Culotte spoke up.

「Though the guild will supply a carriage for us, what about other supplies? In particular, food and potions.」

Hearing Culotte's question, Gran smiled with a grin.

「Only the carriage is provided by the guild. Other necessary supplies are to be provided for yourselves. Naturally, the supplies which each person prepares will be assessed, so be careful.」

Next to ask was Supervia.

「You said a group of bandits, how many are there specifically?」

「I've heard that there will be at least 20.」

「.....I see. Minimum, is it.」

Supervia nodded in understanding at Gran's reply. Because he was at the Orc subjugation, Rei was also able to understand.

「Are there any problems with the words 'at least'?」

Arogan didn't understand the reply and asked Supervia. He turned his eyes to Scola and Culotte, who were next to him, equally puzzled.

「It looks like there are a few people who don't understand. Rei, this is your first job as the leader.」

Prompted by Gran, Rei spoke with a sigh.

「The fact that there is a minimum of 20 people means that there is likely to be more. That means there is a possibility there could be 40 or even 100.」

Arogan and Scola were frightened at those words.

However, Firuma continued from those words to reassure the two people.

「That said, as this mission has been selected for the guild rank up test, there probably won't be an unreasonable number.」

To those words, the two people gave a big sigh of relief. However, Gran again spoke up with a nasty smile.

「Though this certainly is a guild test, however, safety isn't guaranteed. You'll die if you let your guard down.Now then, any other questions?」

To Gran's words, nobody spoke up. Confirming that, Gran directed his eyes to Rei.

「Rei, 1 demerit. Since this is a request, you should have asked about the rewards as the leader.」

「.....Ah, I understand.」

Seeing that pointed out, Rei gave a small nod.

Requests were a means for Rei to obtain magic stones, as for the rewards itself, he usually didn't mind them because he didn't really care about it.

「Though it seems like a small matter, there is a possibility of getting into a dispute with the client if the rewards aren't agreed on first.Well, though you don't need to worry about it if you take a request from the request board in the guild, above D rank, you may occasionally be asked for a request without going through the guild. In cases such as that, you should inquire about the reward before hand, don't forget what I said. By the way, the reward for the rank up test this time is 1 silver coin per person.」

Everyone nodded at Gran's words.

「Now then, we will leave it at that for today. Although I said this earlier, because we will be departing at the 9 o'clock bell, I want everyone to be there with their belongings prepared. And though I'm repeating this again, Rei, you are not allowed to bring your Griffon.」

With his words as a signal, everyone left respectively.

While watching the members of his temporary party leave, Rei involuntarily let out a sigh.

He had never thought that he would end up as the party leader, but even then, the problem was.....

(What to do with Set, is the question. Two days there, two days back. Including the time there, maybe a fifth day. Moreover, that's assuming there's no trouble. Assuming a margin of 2 days, that's a whole week.I can't shut Set in the stable for a whole week.....in that case, I can only entrust him to an able person.....no, wait.)

At that moment, what came to Rei's mind was the figure of Milein. She knew their extra-ordinariness to some degree, further more, she was one of the few people who he had friendly contact with. He didn't need to worry about her either as he had planted a Seed of Contract in her. Moreover, he understood by looking that Milein was quite considerably attached to Set.

「It seems the problem then is whether I can find them before tomorrow.....」

Giving a small murmur, he walked back into the guild without hesitation.

「Lenora, I want to get in contact with Milein from Scorching Wind, is there a easy way?」

Though he looked around the inside of the guild when he re-entered, there was no sign of Milein or Scorching Wind. As it was already well into the day, the chances of bumping into adventurers in the guild was small. He called out to Lenora at the counter without feeling discouraged.

「Scorching Wind's Milein-san, is it? If it's her, she should return to the guild this evening to hand in a request.」

「Do you know the approximate time?」

「No, as expected.....I'm truly sorry.」

「Ahh, no. Don't worry about it. I was also being unreasonable. Then, can I leave a message for when Milein gets back?」

「There's no problem with that.」

To Lenora's words, Rei let out a sigh of relief.

If he wasn't able to leave a message, he would have had to wait in the guild until Scorching Wind came back.

Though most of the things he needed to go out were in the Misty Ring, he was still missing some things. He wanted to replenish his supplies as well as buy some useful items.

「Ah, Rei-kun. Are you trying to flirt with someone while I'm still here?」

While looking at Rei and listening to his interesting conversation with Lenora, Kenny, who was next to them, called out.

Rei shook his head with a wry smile at the situation.

「Not a message in that sense. As you know, I'm taking the rank up test, and it seems I can't bring Set along as he is too strong. Having said that, I felt bad to keep Set in the stables for a week and thought about asking Milein to take care of him in the meantime. Fortunately, Milein is quite happy with Set.」

「I see. It certainly is a problem if you took that kid to the rank up test for D rank. I understand, I'll relay the message for you.」

「Then, please tell them to come to the Dusk Wheat after they hand in their request. I'll explain Set's matter there.」

「Okay, leave it to me.」

「Tch. I feel like I'm being left out.」

As Lenora nodded at Rei's words, Kenny turned her eyes to Rei, somewhat dissatisfied.

After finishing eating dinner at the Dusk Wheat Pavilion, he was relaxing in his room when there was a knock at his door.

「Rei, you there? I got the message from the guild.」

「Ah, wait a moment.」

He put on the Dragon Robe that he had taken off to relax, slipped on the

Shoes of Sleipnir and opened the door.

Aside from Milein, who he had been looking for, the other members of Scorching Wind, Sulunin and Excel, could also be seen.

「I roughly heard the story from Lenora. So you want to leave Set with us for a while? For now, we've all come over as this involves all of Scorching Wind.」

「No Problem. Please come in.」

Nodding to Milein's words, he invited the three people in front of his door into his room.

Though it was a bit uncomfortable to squeeze 4 people into a 1 person room, everyone either sat on the floor, chair or bed.

The first person to start speaking was naturally Milein.

「So, about Set-chan, are you serious about entrusting him to us?」

Though Milein asked that, her face was smiling, full of expectation. As Milein had become obsessed with Set, it was a good time ask them to take care of Set.

「Ah. Though you probably heard it from Lenora at the guild, I'm prohibited from taking Set into the rank up test. That said, I will be away for at least 5 days. I would feel bad for locking Set up in the stables for up to a week.」

「He has the Necklace of Subservient Monster and everyone likes him. If it's Set-chan, surely he'll be welcomed by everyone in town?」

「Milein, that's a little unreasonable.」

It was Sulunin, the brains of Scorching Wind, who replied to Milein's words.

「Even if he's wearing the Necklace of Subservient Monster, as expected, if a high rank monster like a Griffon is walking through town without his master, even if the adventurers know Set, there is a possibility that residents who don't know Rei or Set, or have just come to the city of Gimuru, will panic.」

「Ehh~, even though Set-chan is so cute.....」

「As what Sulunin has said is reasonable, I can always find someone else to take care of Set. Of course, there are advantages with watching Set. You can think of Set as an extra combat force and take requests while I'm on the rank up test.How about that?」

At Rei's words, Milein welcomed it and her face clearly brightened up, Excel also seemed to agree as a smile floated onto her face. As Milein was about to speak up to commit to taking care of Set.....Sulunin interjected again.

「Though we can certainly take care of a tamed monster for a short period of time, often there can be circumstances while looking after one.....though I haven't heard of such a story. However, in the case your tamed monster causes any problems, as the master, you have to take full responsibility.....is my proposal understandable?」

TLN: Just a note here, when Sulunin says tamed monster, he isn't being trying to be rude, he is just referring to Set as Rei's tamed monster in a more formal sense as this involves legal matters, I may not have conveyed this meaning well in the translation so I apologise for that.

「I have no problems with that. This is because I trust you guys, even if anything comes up, Set is clever.」

Hearing Rei's words, Sulunin turned to Milein and gave a small nod.

「I understand. You can trust us to take up the task. As for the increase in combat power increasing.....as Set is a Griffon, I have no complaints.」

With this, all members of Scorching Wind consented to taking care of Set for the duration that Rei was away from Set, subjugating bandits for the rank up test.

However, Rei and Scorching Wind all felt slightly guilty when Set heard it as he looked gave a small cry and looked at Rei with lonely eyes.....

Chapter 49

The day after Scorching Wind's promise to take care of Set, Rei walked with Set down the main street to the main gate before the 9 o'clock bell.

Seeing Set walk down the main street, adventurers and residents who recognised Set gave him food such as dried meat, bread and fruit. But today, Set didn't accept anything and only gave a small cry.

「Hey, is Set okay? He usually eats my dried meat happily.」

A boy about 10 years in age asked anxiously as he tried to give Set some dried meat, Rei gave a wry smile and spoke up.

「Kind of. He's feeling lonely because I have to leave him for a while for a request. Well, if you keep playing with him, maybe he'll forget about it, don't be too discouraged.」

「Yes!」

The boy replied cheerfully. Rei scratched Set's head as he watched the boy run away.

「Set, cheer up. As I said yesterday, it's just one week. And if everything goes smoothly, I'll be back in 5 days.」

「Guru~.....」

Set gave a rather small cry.

He calmed Set by stroking his head followed by his back. The main gate soon came into view as he advanced down the street, enjoying the silky feeling.

「Ah, Rei-kun. You took a request today?」

Ranga saw the figure of Rei and called out to him.

「No, it's the rank up test. Give me a minute, the meeting point was here.....」

「Set-chan! Are you doing well? Ah, Rei, it's only been since last night. 」

Speaking of her, he noticed Milein, the leader of the party Scorching Wind, whom he was entrusting Set to. Milein stroked Set's back while hugging him.

「Mmm, the touch and feel is the same as usual.However, he's still not feeling happy. Though you might be lonely without Rei, let's do our best for the next few days.」

「Oh, Milein-san.Separating from Rei-kun?」

「Actually, Rei is taking the rank up test for the next few days, and he seems to have been told by the guild that his Griffon is an excessive combat force. Because he said he felt sorry for locking Set up in the stables for a week while he's doing the rank up test, we will be taking care of him.」

Sulunin got to the point and explained the situation to Ranga.

Though Ranga showed some understanding, as part of his job, he spoke to Rei.

「Though there's no issues with leaving your tamed monster with an acquaintance, because the tamed monster was registered by Rei, you will bare the full consequences if something happens.....you understand that right?」

「I heard that from Sulunin yesterday. I judged it would be safe to leave Set to these guys.」

「Is that so, then I won't say any more if you know it. Then, your guild card and the Necklace of Subservient Monster.」

According to Ranga's words, Rei's guild card and the Necklace of Subservient Monster hanging on Set's neck were given to him.

「Yes, that's fine. In that case, take care of yourself.」

With the Necklace of Subservient Monster handed in and the guild card returned, he went out the main gate with Scorching Wind.

「Well then, we'll excuse ourselves here as we have a Treant subjugation request. We'll take care of Set as much as we can, so work hard on your rank up test Rei. Hey, is your meeting point over there?」

When he turned his eyes to the direction Milein indicated, he saw a large carriage there. And along with carriage was the figures of Gran, who was the examiner, and Supervia, who he would be working with for the time being.

「Ah. Well then, I'm counting on you Set. Set, I'll look forward to seeing you again in a week's time.」

「Guru~.....」

Though Set rubbed his head against Rei, feeling lonely, Rei brushed his head lightly before heading for Gran.

「Guru~!」

Finally, giving one last loud cry as if saying, do your best, led by Milein, Set went along the highway with Scorching Wind.

「Is that the tamed Griffon you mentioned yesterday?It certainly looks very powerful. 」

As Rei approached the carriage, Supervia called out.

「Ah well. He's my irreplaceable partner. Anyway, you're early.」

「Ah. Training with the sword every morning has become a daily routine for me. It's become natural for me to get up early.」

While saying so, Supervia tapped the long sword that was equipped at his waist.

「I see. So, Gran. Is this the carriage that the guild has prepared?」

While asking Gran, he directed his eyes to the horse drawn carriage.

It's size was the same type as the ones he had rode in when he went to the Orc subjugation. Though it might be a little cramped for 7 people, Rei's party of 6 plus Gran, there wasn't a substantial problem as there had to be a driver and guard sitting outside. However, this was a different time and place from the Orc subjugation.....

「They're small.」

Looking at Rei's line of sight, he was looking at the horses pulling the carriage. But rather than the warhorses used in the Orc subjugation, they were ordinary horses. They were small compared to Rei's strong impression from the warhorses, they didn't feel as reliable. However, maybe as a substitute, instead of 2 horses, the number of horses pulling the carriage in front of Rei's eyes were 3.

Gran, who guessed his thoughts, stroked the horses who were attached to the carriage while smiling wryly.

「I know what you're comparing them with, warhorses are precious, even to the guild. Whatever the circumstances, any requests to borrow them for the rank up test to D rank would be denied.」

As they were conversing like that, two more people, Culotte and Scola, appeared from the main gate of the city of Gimuru.

「Good morning. As we'll be working together for a while, nice to meet you all.」

「Nice to work with you too.」

Moving towards Rei, the two people bowed their heads as they greeted him.

Her attitude had changed completely from yesterday and was a lot more toned down, you wouldn't imagine that she was the same person who had viciously snapped at Rei before.

Looking at Rei's appearance, it was easy to guess what he was thinking. As Culotte spoke with Gran, Scola went toward Rei and Supervia.

「That is, are you surprised about Culotte's change in attitude from yesterday?」

「That's right.」

「It certainly is greatly different.」

Scola spoke up while smiling wryly at the two people.

「Actually, Culotte has social anxiety. Added to that, this is the first time she's taken the rank up test. Because of that, she was too enthused about it and acted recklessly.」

The three people looked towards Culotte, who was talking with Gran, with surprised expressions at Scola's words.

Now that that was said, Culotte actually looked quite nice from Rei's eyes.

(It's great if the thief, who is the eyes of the party, isn't too stressed. If it was Set, there would be no worries of course.)

Set's senses were worthy of a monster at his rank, in the literal sense, it had reached the domain of a cheat. In the monster subjugation requests Rei and Set had received until now, discovering the signs and sounds of monsters nearby

was Set's job.

Because of that, Rei, who was serving as the party leader, was happy about Culotte's current state.

「Ah, everyone is early. I wonder if I'm a little late? Good morning.」

A new voice in high spirits called out.

The owner of the voice, was the elf, Firuma. She carried a bow in her hand and a quiver on her back.

Everyone returned a greeting and started to talk about what they had brought and about the upcoming test. Before long, the 9 o'clock bell rang into the surroundings.

(.....So, where's Arogon?)

Though the sound of the bell was heard and he looked around, other than Rei, there were only 5 people, Gran, Supervia, Culotte, Scola and Firuma. Aside from Rei, the others also seemed to have noticed and were looking around.

However, understanding that Arogon had not appeared, the four people aside from Gran, looked to Rei.

As he received the silent pressure as party leader, he called out to Gran.

「Though the 9 o'clock bell has rung, Arogon hasn't come, what happens in this situation?」

「Ahh, that's right. Such a development was not expected indeed. However, an adventurer being late for the appointed request start time is a fairly large demerit. Moreover, to be late on the important day of the rank up test.....」

As Gran said so and was about to declare Arogon's disqualification, he saw Arogon casually walking from the main gate.

「Sorry, am I late?」

He called out in a light tone.

「.....Hey, that's all?」

To that scene, probably involuntarily, Supervia called out.

「Ah? What. You haven't even left yet so it's fine.」

「Wai-, seriously, you! Maybe you don't care about the rank up test but this is serious! What's with that attitude when you're late!」

Not being able to put up with Arogan's attitude anymore, Culotte snapped out. However, all Arogan did was give a snort and laugh.

「Hmm, you can only talk with your mouth, you couldn't do anything against me in the mock battle yesterday.」

「What!」

Having the event pointed out to deride her, Culotte was going to snap back. Scola calmed her down while both Supervia and Firuma sent cold looks at Arogan.

And while Rei wasn't normal, seeing the state of his fellow party members, he involuntarily spat out a sigh.

(To begin with, Culotte is a thief and not a warrior, you shouldn't boast because you beat her in your own field of combat.)

Now, as he looked at the surroundings, his eyes met Gran's. His eyes told Rei to do something as the party leader.

Spitting out another sigh, he took out the Death Scythe from the Misty Ring and placed it against Arogan's neck at a speed which nobody's eyes could follow.

「Though you said Culotte couldn't do anything against you, have you already forgotten what happened 6 days ago? Who was it that boasted after picking a fight with me in front of the guild and had their magic sword knocked away?」
「.....」

With the huge blade pointed at his neck, it seems he couldn't keep the same attitude he had before.

From the start, in the previous event, Rei had pointed out Arogan's weakness out of consideration, he couldn't take his aggressive attitude against Culotte.

He spoke to Arogan, while Supervia and Firuma looked on coldly.

「Do you have anything to say?」

「.....I'm sorry I was late. I'll be more careful next time.」

Though reluctantly, under the circumstances, Arogan replied. Rei stored the Death Scythe at Arogan's neck back into the Misty Ring.

「In any case, this is an exam for a party, not for individuals. If you drag your feet, understand that it will affect the others.Understand?」

「.....Ah.」

Seeing Arogan nod, Rei turned his eyes to Gran.

「I want to get going soon.」

「You decide from here. I will guide you to the bandit hideout, other than that, I won't be helping you.」

Listening to his words, Rei looked around.

「First of all, is there anyone here who can drive a carriage?」

To that question, three people, Culotte, Scola and Supervia raised their hands.

「I see, then you three will take turns to drive the carriage. The other 3, Firuma, Arogan and I will sit next to the driver in case of monster attacks. However, Arogan. As a penalty for before, you'll be on watch more often. If you cut corners and receive a surprise attack from monsters.....what may go flying through the air may not be your magic sword but your head, okay? 」

Maybe understanding the seriousness of Rei's words, Arogan nodded with a serious look on his face.

「Right, then we'll depart. The first driver is Scola. The lookout will be Arogan. Put the baggage that you've brought to the back of the carriage.」

So, declaring that to those participating in the rank up test, everyone climbed into the carriage.

Chapter 50

While shaking with a gata~ goto~ sound, a single carriage advanced along the highway. The speed of the carriage pulled by the 3 horses was fast. A person wearing the robe, who was supposed to be a mage, was sitting in driver's seat, holding the horses' reins. A man who looked to be a warrior was sitting next to the mage, watching the surroundings for surprise attacks from monsters.

And inside the carriage.

「Uwa~, it really is warm. When were these bought?」

「Ah, I've forgotten but it should have been a few days ago, but no doubt it's still freshly baked.」

Though Culotte was surprised, Rei just smiled as he took some freshly baked cookies from the Misty Ring and carried them to his mouth.

「Oh, it smells good. May I have one?」

「Sure. You should also try Firuma, they're quite delicious.」

Firuma seemed to have been lured by the smell and involuntarily carried a cookie to her mouth.

「Oh, it really is.Your item box is great. Being able to eat freshly baked cookies at any time.」

「.....No, I don't think it's normal to use an item box in this way.」

To Firuma's words, Supervia answered, dumbfounded.

To Supervia's appearance, Rei understood that his use of the item box was different from normal. He held out a dish holding the remaining freshly baked cookies while smiling wryly.

「Eating?」

But Supervia looked at the cookies placed on the dish and shook his head from side to side.

「No, I don't like sweet food.」

「Then I'll have one.」

In response to Supervia, who refused, Gran stretched out his hand to grab a cookie before carrying it to his mouth.

「Mm, it certainly is delicious.」

Unlike Arogan, who was feeling the tension in the drivers seat outside, it was rather laid back inside the carriage.

Compared to yesterday, where Culotte had been aggressive to Rei because of her stress, after a day, she had become accustomed to the tension and had returned to her normal attitude.

As she was the eyes and ears of the party, he felt relieved at Culotte's current state. While carrying cookies to his mouth, Rei spoke up to Gran.

「Though this test is a thief subjugation, should we consider catching them alive? During the Orc subjugation, I heard from Hobbes that it was possible to sell bandits as slaves if they were caught alive.」

「Ahh, you certainly could normally, after all, these are bandits.....no, the aim is to see if you can kill the enemy if they are humans. Considering if you knock them all out.....no, you shouldn't mind that, just kill them.」

In order to stop them from falling to the thought that they didn't need to kill people, Gran changed his words and told them to just kill them all.

Firuma and Culotte frowned their eyebrows slightly when they heard it, in contrast, Rei and Supervia accepted it without any change in their expression.

「But speaking of that, aren't there at least 20 bandits? It seems a little difficult to take on that many opponents with 6 people.」

「No, not really. After all, we'll be able to mount a surprise attack as we are the attacking group.However, whether we can launch a surprise attack or not depends on whether we can work together.」

To Culotte, who was murmuring anxiously, Rei replied.

In fact, even if you said bandits fought together with their companions, and considering other elements, such as human intelligence, though their degree of risk and their combat power was higher than Goblins, speaking in terms of ranks, they were at the equivalent of E rank, below Orcs.

However, because the bandits were humans, though to be precise, Elves, Beastkin and Dwarves were occasionally mixed in, adventurers below D rank may possibly hesitate to kill them.

「That's true. In fact, Gran said that the participants in the test this time were quite good. In the first place, a party of 6 where 3 can use magic is a luxury for a bandit subjugation.」

Supervia overheard Rei and Culotte's exchange and told them that with a wry smile to relieve her tension.

「.....By the way, I can use spirit magic and the driver, Scola, can use wind magic, what magic can you use Rei?」

She might have had some interest as in the mock battle the day before, Rei had only used the Death Scythe in combat. Firuma leaned forward and asked.

(Elf, hmm.)

Rei spoke while being somewhat puzzled at how Firuma was greatly different from the image he had of elves.

「Basically, my main magic is fire. However, though it's power is strong, it also has a large area of effect. I'm not capable of adjusting my power, so in capture situations it's no use as I would annihilate everything by turning them to charcoal.」

「Hmm.Certainly, from my view, Rei's magic power is very high.That's compared to high elves who are a higher ranking race, compared to elves.....」

The last part was murmured so as to not be heard.

At the time of the rank up test meeting the day before, when Firuma saw Rei enter the meeting room, she could feel that his magic power was the greatest she had ever seen. Because of that, she was tense in the meeting room, ready to escape at any time if need be.

(In fact, Rei's amount of magic power is not normal. It's as if magic power had taken the form of a human. Indeed, a human can't have that much magic power.....is he not human? I see, it possibly could be. However, at the very least, mutual understanding is possible and there's no need to be hostile.)

While observing and evaluating Rei in her mind, at the very least, she calmed herself down as the possibility of him harming them was low.

As for Firuma, compared to 10 or 20 bandits, she felt Rei's risk was higher. However, the stress gradually disappeared as they continued conversing.

「Hey, Rei. Shouldn't we set up camp soon?」

As the sun started to set on the advancing carriage, Scola called out to Rei.

Hearing that, Rei looked out the window and thought for a few seconds before nodding.

「You're right, there's a possibility of straining ourselves tomorrow if we overdo it on the first day.」

Nodding to Scola's proposal, Rei opened the door that was connected to the drivers seat and called out to Supervia, who was driving, and Arogan, who was on lookout.

「Please stop if you find a good spot for setting up a camp.」

「Ahh, I understand.」

「.....」

Supervia replied to Rei's words while Arogan answered in silence.

The trouble from the departure time still remained and there was still tension drifting around the driver's seats.

In such a state, Supervia didn't have the nature to cause trouble and kept his silence, because of the event from a while back as well as before the departure that morning, Arogan's fear of Rei kept him quiet as he watched for enemy attacks.

And discovering a place behind some rocks and shielded from the surroundings, the two people in the driver's seats called the others and they decided to stay there for the night.

Stopping the carriage in an area protected by rocks, Rei took out the tent for the men. Culotte set up the tent she had for the women.

At the same time, Firuma, the elf, collected firewood from the forest nearby while Arogan drew some water from the river. With that, the camp

preparations were complete.

After distributing the food for dinner.

「The watch will be in pairs. There will be 3 shifts.」

While saying that, Rei took out an hourglass from the Misty Ring.

It was a magic tool that he had purchased in a tool shop the day before, it was called Hourglass. Though it was only 5cm tall, because it was made with crushed magic stones that had been processed using alchemy, it was a fairly expensive magic tool. For a normal hourglass to measure for 2 hours, it's size needs to be quite big, but as this hourglass was a magic item made with magic stones, it was possible to measure 2 hours with only the height of 5cm.

「Because the sand in the hourglass will take 2 hours to fall, switch out when the sand runs out. The first shift is Arogan and Scola. Second shift is Culotte and Supervia. Last shift is Firuma and I. Any objections?」

「What is the basis for the pairings?」

Sitting across the bonfire, opposite Rei, Supervia asked.

Although Culotte look at him in dissatisfaction as he asked about the pairings, Supervia ignored it and waited for Rei's reply.

「The first watch is a swordsman and a mage. The second shift is a swordsman and a thief. The third shift is a magic warrior and a ranger. I intend to distribute our combat power evenly.」

TLN: You mean you want the elf, that power distribution is clearly not even 😊.

「.....Understood. That's fine.」

After Supervia nodded, because there weren't any other people with different opinions, it became free time.

While Culotte and Firuma were having a talk between women, Arogan was maintaining his magic sword that he was proud of. To train his magic, Scola was repeatedly creating and canceling the water whip he had used used in the mock battle yesterday. Gran watched them all without saying anything himself. Rei was eating a Kum Fruit, that he had bought in the city, for dessert, it had the

texture of a pear with the acidity of an orange.

During this, Supervia approached Rei and called out to him.

「Rei, do you have a moment?」

「Ah.」

「It would be good if it's possible, but could you keep me company during my sword practice?」

「Sword practice?」

「Anyhow, I want to move my body a little as I was stuck in the carriage for a long time today.」

After thinking about it for a bit, Rei nodded.

Though it would have been better to practice with Arogan, he judged that he wasn't a good match for Supervia because of his arrogant attitude.

Though Supervia called out for practice, he also gave off the atmosphere that he wanted payback for the mock battle from yesterday rather than training.

「In that case, move a little bit further. There's no need to injure each other doing this.」

「Ahh, that's fine.」

Supervia nodded to Rei's proposal.

Noting that they were too close, Rei took out the Death Scythe after moving a bit further away, Supervia also removed his sword from his sheath.

Seeing the state of the two people, Gran, Culotte and Firuma watched interestedly. Arogan frequently gave glances while pretending not to be interested. The only person who showed no interest was Scola, who was concentrating on his magic training.

「Come.」

「Here I come!」

Giving a sharp cry at Rei's words, he kicked against the ground, entering his range. He judged that entering into close combat would render the length of the Death Scythe useless. And with that, Rei swung down the Death Scythe.

So far, it was the same pattern as yesterday. Yesterday, Supervia was blown

away after blocking the Death Scythe with his sword. However.....

「The choice I should make is evade rather than parry!」

Feeling the Death Scythe approach from his side, he lowered his posture to almost a crawl to dodge it. And, taking advantage of that, he stepped forwards and swept his sword in from the side.....

「Not good enough..」

As he was about to go for it, at that moment, the handle of the Death Scythe that should have swept above Supervia was for some reason in front of him.

The long sword that was sweeping in from the side was naturally caught at the hilt.

「Tch!」

As soon as his attack was blocked, he realised that his current position was dangerous. He tried to jump back immediately but as he was thinking that, something hit his ankles. Supervia was rolling on the ground before he realised it.

The huge blade of the Death Scythe was thrust in front of his eyes.

「.....Now, what next?」

What next, though he heard it, he knew he had done his best against Rei. However, he didn't understand why it happened. Because it was a rematch against the opponent who defeated him yesterday, he didn't cut any corners. But despite paying careful attention, he still had his feet knocked out from under him without realising it at all.

As for Rei, he didn't mind Supervia's eyes, who were looking at him in some sort of shock. He readied the Death Scythe again after moving a few steps away.

「What's wrong? Has the practice already finished?」

Maybe Rei's words stimulated his pride, Supervia stood up.

After all, unlike yesterday, his feet had only been knocked out from under him. In this state, there was no problem to continue the training.

With a difference in ability that could be called overwhelming, it provided an

extra stimulus to Supervia's motivation.

「Haah!」

He swung down the long sword with a yell, next was a side sweep, a stab, a low blow at his feet.

All those attacks were dodged, evaded or parried.

Like that, rather than calling it a mock battle, the fight continued for 20 minutes. Suddenly, Rei stored the Death Scythe back into the Misty Ring.

「What wrong? I can still continue.」

Though he said that, it was clear to everyone that Supervia's breath was already ragged.

「If we continue, we'll be fatigued tomorrow. We'll leave it here for today.」
「.....」

Though he was somewhat dissatisfied, he understood Rei's meaning. Reluctantly, he returned his sword into his sheath.

In this way, the first night of the rank up test passed by uneventfully.

Chapter 51

Pachi~, pachi~, the flames crackled in the campfire.

While watching the flames, Rei kept track of the surrounding movements and sounds.

At night, monsters would run rampant around the outskirts of the city of Gimuru and frequently appeared on the highway. The monsters didn't even care who they attacked.

In fact while Rei and Firuma were on lookout, there were already 5 Goblins casually piled up at the periphery of the campfire. They were not defeated by Rei, they were defeated by Culotee and Supervia during their turn on lookout.

Fortunately, as they hadn't received an attack since then, they weren't as tense. Firuma held out a cup of tea using water that had just been boiled on the campfire and handed it to Rei.

「Here.」

「Sorry about this.」

Receiving the cup, he took several sips after smelling the fragrance.

Though it had already passed mid summer and was entering late summer, the nights could still be said to be very warm.

Under these circumstances, Firuma looked interestingly at Rei, who was drinking the tea without sweating.

「Hey, how can you drink hot tea in this hot weather without even sweating?」

To those words, though he twitched for a moment, he spoke up as Firuma looked at him silently.

「Aren't you the same? Or are elves good at coping with the heat?」

「Hmm, well, about that. I suppose we can cope with a certain degree of heat because we live in the forests?」

「.....About elves, I've heard stories, but don't you usually shut yourselves up in

the forest depths without coming out to human areas?」

「Ahaha~. I see, if it's some of the elves who are very old then that certainly might be so.」

While smiling, Firuma had a somewhat lonely expression.

Rei saw that and understanding that he shouldn't ask too deeply about the reason, changed the topic.

「Speaking of which, your bow seems to be quite a good weapon.」

Rei glanced at Firuma's bow. Firuma was sitting opposite Rei, across the campfire, and had placed her bow down.

Though Rei didn't have the power to feel other peoples magic, which a lot of mages could, he was still able to feel something from the bow. It was the same kind of feeling as Arogan's magic sword and the Orc King's great sword, in other words, he judged that it was a magic item.

「Ah, as I thought, you could tell? This is a family heirloom that is handed down from generation to generation. It's an excellent weapon that can grant the wind attribute to arrows.」

「Heh~, wind attribute. Should I say, as expected of elves?」

「Ahaha~. I'll take that as a compliment. But Rei, isn't your own large scythe quite a good weapon?」

Firuma eyed the Death Scythe that was placed next to Rei.

In yesterday's fight, while watching the mock battle before going to bed, she saw Rei's small and delicate build easily handling a chunk of metal over 2m in size. Adding to that, sometimes it was with one hand.

「Seeing the mock battle from before.....does it not let the wielder feel its weight?」

「That's right. No doubt, that's one of its abilities.」

「Heh~, from your words, there seems to be some hidden abilities.」

「Something like that.Well, if it starts to get difficult, you might be able to see them.」

While avoiding the issue, he drank the last of the tea in his cup.

He wasn't naive enough to think of honestly disclosing all his magic items and trump card abilities to Firuma from the beginning.

They continued straight to the next topic.

「Hey, could I ask you something?」

「Ah.」

「Rei, why did you want to become an adventurer?」

「My reason for becoming an adventurer.That's right.....」

In his mind, he recalled the explanation he had given to Ranga when he arrived at the city of Gimuru for the first time.

「Originally, I lived for a while with my master who taught me magic. Adding to that, as it was in the heart of the mountains, there wasn't anyone aside from my master and I.」

「Heh~. In the heart of the mountains, so you lived like the Elves.」

「Something like that. So in any case, I learnt magic from my master. As soon as that finished, Set — ah, he's the Griffon I tamed — and I were forcibly sent to the Forest of Monsters with spatial magic. After that, I reached the city of Gimuru after slipping out of the Forest of Monsters.」

While listening to Rei's description, Firuma had a stunned expression.

As elves lived in forests, she had heard rumors of the Forest of Monsters.

They say that after you go in, you can never get back out.

They say that it was a forest where multiple Dragon species lived.

They say it was where the Majin of old slept

They say that large numbers of A rank monsters lived there, and so on. It was a forest with countless rumors that it was impossible to know what was truth and what was a lie.

Because of that, Firuma was surprised that Rei, who was able to safely escaped from the Forest of Magic, wasn't A rank, let alone D rank.

「.....It was good that you was safely able to get out of the Forest of Monsters.」

「Well, though we hardly encountered any monsters, it was all due to Set. So,

anyway, I got out of the Forest of Monsters thanks to Set, but as you know Set is quite big. In other words, the food he requires each day is also correspondingly big. So, I thought up the idea of defeating monsters and feeding their meat to Set..... If I became an adventurer, I would defeat monsters and Set would eat the meat. Moreover, if I received subjugation requests, proofs of subjugation and materials could also be sold at the guild, there were various benefits. That's the simple reason.」

There was no way he was going to say that he became an adventurer in order to collect magic stones.

However, what Rei said about hunting monsters for food for Set or the story about receiving subjugation requests weren't complete lies.

「So, that's my reason for being here.....hm? While talking, the sky seems to have brightened.」

Looking around, sunrise could be seen as the sun rose from the east.

Though Firuma probably intended to talk about why she became an adventurer, it left her mind as she was captivated by the beautiful morning glow.

While the two people watched the morning glow, as the surrounding area brightened up, a goso~ goso~ rustling sound could be heard from one of the tents.

「Ara~, that's a shame. I wasn't able to talk about why I became an adventurer.」

Saying that as she threw some dead wood into the campfire, Firuma greeted Cullote, who came out of the tent.

While seeing that, the second day of the rank up test began.

「That's the bandit hideout.」

Inside the forest, Culotte, who was playing her role as the eyes of the party, muttered as she looked at a huge cliff ahead.

It was noon of the third day since the rank up test had begun, from Gran's information, Culotte had easily found the bandit hideout.

A cliff drop of about 100m. At the bottom of the cliff, bandits could be seen coming in and out. The cave entrance probably led to the location the bandits were using as their headquarters. That was the bandit hideout that Gran had talked about.

「I see, with that small entrance, it certainly is impossible for large monsters to enter.」

The entrance to the cave in the cliff was quite small, when the bandits went in and out, they had to crouch down.

And though it was large enough for a person to get through, there were also bandits on lookout.

Confirming that, Culotte quickly went back to the place where Gran was waiting.

「I've found it.」

「Woah! Don't scare me.」

To Culotte, who came out of the forest with barely a sound, Arogan almost reflexive attacked with his magic sword. But seeing that it was Culotte, he grumbled as he steadied his posture.

「What, it's bad to be absent minded.」

「Come on now, cut it out Arogan and Culotte. You never learn every time.」

Looking at both of them, Firuma chided.

Any how, it could be understood that these two people really couldn't get along ever since the mock battle in the city of Gimuru. They had quarreled several times ever since leaving the city of Gimuru.

Each time, either Scola or Firuma intervened to stop them. Supervia held the attitude of ignoring them while Gran couldn't interfere as he was the examiner. And if you asked about Rei, as he was bad at dealing with people, he ended up angering Culotte further instead of calming her down.

Well, though it could be because of the arbitration, Arogan quickly stopped arguing and left. It seemed he still had some fear of Rei.

「Tch, I understand. There's no fun with getting into a dispute with a thief

anyway.」

Fortunately, there weren't any particular problems as Arogan pulled out before it became a fight.

Rei called out to Culotte after glancing at Arogan.

「So, did you find the bandit hideout?」

「Eh? Ah, yes. As Gran-san said, the exit from their hideout to the forest is in a cave in a cliff.」

「A base in a cave.....is it. Then it might be cleaned up surprisingly easily?」

「Eh? What do you mean?」

Maybe he was interested at Rei's words, Scola asked. Rei's answer was clear and simple.

「What, that's easy. All I need to do is cast my fire magic from the entrance of the cave. With that, everyone inside will either be burnt to death or suffocate. Though it's unlikely, even if there is a mage, they can't protect all the bandits.」

「.....That's a little.....」

As Rei said his idea, Scola words were stuck in his throat.

However, it was Supervia who objected.

「Please wait. Though Rei's plan is certainly efficient, what happens if there are people in the cave who were caught by bandits? They would be burnt together with the bandits.」

「In addition, the bandits treasure. Wouldn't it be a waste to burn up all the treasure those guys have gathered.」

Following Supervia, Culotte also rejected it.

It should be noted that adventurers who did bandit subjugation requests were basically allowed to take the valuables in the bandit hideout. Tentatively speaking, if a merchant insisted on claiming the items back, they would have to pay the adventurer for it, but that was rare as merchants attacked by bandits were often killed.

「Incidentally, one more thing. Though you seem to have forgotten, the purpose of the examination is to test if you can kill people. If Rei killed them all,

it wouldn't be possible to determine if the others could rank up or not.」

With one objection after another, Rei could only accept as he also understood the basis for its rejection

「Well, it's troublesome, I understand. It's an adventurers job to do troublesome things. As the leader, you have to fill the role properly.」

As Gran tapped his shoulder, Rei thought about the strategy again.

「Culotte, was the cliff entrance the only entrance you found?」

「Ah, I'm not sure. Either way, it was a pretty large cliff so it would have taken a while to go around it.....tentatively speaking, as far as I could see, there wasn't another entrance.」

「It seems the surroundings are also uncertain. In that case a surprise attack is best. That's good, listen up. We'll launch a night attack tonight.」

「Why don't we attack now? If we attack at night, won't we have to go through the forest at night? There is a possibility of getting attacked by monsters in the forest.」

To Supervia, who was confused about the night attack, Rei gave a small nod.

「If we go through the forest at night, we certainly might be attacked by monsters. However, in the daytime, there's also a possibility that not all the bandits will be in the hideout.」

「I see, they could be out doing their business.」

「Ah. However, bandits won't go out at night because of the monsters around. That's why this is the plan.」

「I understand. Please continue.」

「But since I've said night time, as expected, they should have a lookout. Culotte, how are the surroundings?」

To Rei's question, Culotte recalled the scene she had seen earlier.

「Close to the entrance, there was a small lookout building. I'm not sure if there will be guards at night.」

「If there is a watch, how many people will there be?」

「Hmm, though I can't say for sure.....maybe 2 people.」

Listening to Culotte's words, Rei looked to Firuma and Scola.

「Can you two kill the lookouts from long distance? Without making a sound as much as possible.」

「I guess so. If it's one, I can bring them down with my bow.....Scola?」

「Depends on the distance. Culotte, you roughly understand the range of my magic right? How is it?」

「I think you can reach it if you use Wind Arrow.」

「I see. Then I'm fine.」

Hearing Scola's words, Rei nodded.

「Then, after defeating the lookouts, first, Culotte will go in and check how many people there are. At the same time, check if anyone has been captured.」

「I understand.」

「After that, Supervia and Arogan will take the vanguard. Firuma and Scola will be at the back.」

「What should I do after scouting?」

「After you know the number of people, and if there are no captured people, see if there are any other exits. Join back with use when you're finished. If you find captured people, then you'll have to rescue them.」

「I understand.By the way Rei, what will you do?」

「Finally, I'm last. When we launch the surprise attack, isn't it necessary for someone to defend Firuma and Scola? In addition, because of its length, the Death Scythe isn't suitable for fighting in narrow places. And because my main magic attribute is fire, it's difficult to use it in a cave.」

The 5 people nodded at Rei's explanation. Gran watched the situation from a distance in satisfaction.

(What, though his social skills are a weak point, he's doing quite well as a party leader. I can relax much easier with this.)

「Okay, we'll take a break now in preparation for the night attack. The lookout order is the same as last night.」

Following Rei's instructions, they split up into lookout and sleeping as they prepared for the night attack.

Chapter 52

In the night forest, the sounds of mayflies persistently echoed. In such an environment, several people advanced through the forest.

「Tch, they're persistent!」

Arogan, who was advancing at the front, brandished his magic sword at the darkness in front of him while clicking his tongue. A Goblin that was about to attack had its head cut off and fell down before it could even scream.

「Seriously, are we crazy to go through the forest at night?」

「.....You didn't say anything during the strategy meeting at noon. Too late now, isn't it?」

As he said that, Supervia thrust his sword into a 1m long Giant Bat without a sound.

「Haa~, I don't understand why you're taking monsters so lightly.」

「You know, if you have any complaints, you should talk to the person himself and not us. You always go quiet in front of Rei, and you get all arrogant when he's not around.」

「Ahh!?」

Though Arogan scowled at Culotte, he understood that they shouldn't be wasting their time with this and quickly advanced through the forest.

「Generally speaking, our party balance isn't that bad? One thief, two warriors. However, we don't have enough for a rear guard.」

However, he still grumbled.

Yes. The only people currently advancing through the forest at night were Arogan, Supervia and Culotte. Of course, Rei, Firuma and Scola weren't just resting at the back. According to the strategy discussed at noon, the 3 would stay back to look for a position to snipe the bandit lookouts. These 3 had a different job, they had to quickly cut down the lookouts in the case the long distance sniping failed.....

「Rather, if the sniping fails, the lookout will alert the guys inside. So we have to do something about it. In the first place, why couldn't they come with us and then snipe.」

「That's why I was saying, Rei said this just to be sure. Aside from that, come on, we're almost out of the forest. It will be bad if we suddenly came out and alerted the people on lookout. There's no helping that the sniping group is taking separate action. Aside from the ranger, Firuma, and Rei, who's mysterious in various ways, Scola is a genuine mage so he needs to be at a distance that won't alert the bandits.」

Though Supervia said that to Arogan, Culotte smiled as she heard that and continued.

「That's right, Rei would be harsh to Arogan if we were seen like this. I want to see how he would look like.」

「Hey, don't say something nasty like that as a joke. Seriously, I understand, I'll do it seriously.」

While Arogan demonstrated his strange ability to cry out in hushed tones, Culotte quietly looked ahead to the point where forest ended and where the cliff entrance to the bandit hideout was.

As according to Culotte's expectations, there were 2 lookouts. However, you could clearly see they weren't taking it seriously.

(Are they confident that their hideout wouldn't be found.....or are they just stupid.)

Glancing for a moment, Culotte turned her eyes to Arogan.

(.....Though he's probably stupider.)

It would have been nice to have a torch. After all, although as adventurers, they had the occupation of thief, they weren't bandits, and just because Culotte was a thief, it didn't mean she stole things or had good night vision.

However, although they were called lookouts, they weren't really looking around, instead they were talking with each other and laughing loudly. Seeing that, Culotte couldn't really call it a lookout. Anyway, erasing her sounds, she got within 10m of the lookout without them noticing.

(Scola wouldn't have been able to erase his sounds at this range, thinking of that, even Arogan might have issues.

Muttering in her mind, she checked to see how the two people were doing.

Both Arogan and Supervia had already pulled out their weapons, they were ready to attack at any time. Culotte checked her dagger, which had been used to cut the throat of a Goblin in the forest, and waited.

「.....Still not yet?」

They had been hiding on the edge of the forest for a few minutes. Maybe he was impatient that the attack still hadn't begun, Arogan gave a small mutter while Culotte patiently waited for Scola and Firuma's attack.

「I'm amazed.」

At the sniping location, away from Culotte's position, Firuma muttered in amazement as she watched the bandit lookout, visible in the distance.

It was no wonder, the people at the lookout were laugh and talking, they basically weren't acting as lookouts.

「You know, since you're helping us all, you shouldn't blame yourself, okay?」
「I understand.....right.」

While listening to their exchange, Rei looked towards the forest.

Normally speaking, if he wasn't a thief like Culotte, it would be impossible for him to grasp the state of the dark forest. However, because his body was made by Zepairu's organisation and ignored common sense, he could see into the forest without any issues.

In Rei's view, he could clearly see the 3 people, Arogan, Supervia and Culotte, hiding near the edge of the forest.

「It seems the 3 people in the vanguard have reached their positions successfully. Are you ready?」

The two people nodded in silence to Rei's words.

Seeing that, Rei nodded as he told them to start the night attack.

「Okay, Scola, start casting your magic. Firuma must match his timing and

attack with your bow at the same time Scola casts his magic.」

「I understand.」

「Leave it to me.」

Nodding, Scola began to cast his spell, Firuma notched an arrow to her bow to match the timing.

『Wind, turn into an unseen arrow to pierce those before me.』

Scola's incantation to cast his magic was the same one he used in the mock battle., invisible arrows were created. The invisible wind arrows were already difficult to see in the day, at night, their stealthiness increased further.

Finishing the incantation, Scola held his magic in place, ready to cast, and looked at Firuma. Seeing Firuma's nod, he released his magic.

『Wind Arrow!』

Along with his words, 5 invisible wind arrows were launched. At the same time, Firuma let lose her arrow towards the lookout.

The next moment the two attacks were released, the wind arrows stabbed into the neck and head of the lookout who was sitting down, the other man didn't realise what had happened as an arrow dropped down and pierced into his head at the same time.

「They've done it!」

The lookout hit in the neck and face by the wind arrows crumpled to the ground, spouting blood from the wounds in his neck and face. The other man fell at almost the same time, an arrow piercing his head. Seeing that, Culotte gave a sharp cry to Arogan and Supervia.

The two people heard the words and started running quickly out of the fores, rapidly closing the distance to the lookout.

And as they closed the distance, Supervia clicked his tongue.

「That's bad, the person Scola attacked with magic hasn't been killed. Arogan, you have to kill the lookout on the ground that's still alive. Watch out for people coming out of the cave.」

「Hey, why me!」

「Shut up, we don't have the time. From now on, there's no time to spare. It's a race against time.」

「Tch, I understand, damn it.」

While talking, they finally reached the lookout. Supervia hid himself next to the entrance and check inside as said that to Arogan.

Fortunately, all they could hear was laughter and cheers. Judging that they were all reveling and probably didn't notice what happened to the lookout, Supervia let out a sigh of relief.

Nearby, Arogan was looking at the lookout who was struggling on the ground in pain and confusion.....Arogan froze up.

「Shit, like this.....」

「Gah~.....ugh, urk.....」

To the misfortune of the lookout, Scola's magic was still immature.No, for an E rank adventure, it was already strong enough. But even though all 5 wind arrows had hit his head and neck, as they prioritized speed and stealth, they weren't enough to kill the lookout.

In that sense, maybe the happier person was the one who had his head pierced by Firuma's arrow. Because he was killed instantly, he wouldn't have known what had happened.

「Arogan, make it quick!」

Kill him, Supervia quietly ordered Arogan, who was hesitating.

However, for Arogan to kill a person.....it was the first time he had to kill someone of the same race, his hands trembled and wouldn't move properly. In the mock battle against Rei, Arogan had gone in with the intention to kill! But though he wielded a magic sword, for better or worse, it he hadn't actually killed anyone. Because of that, the magic sword in his hand trembled.

「Tch, Culotte, as Rei said, check inside the cave.」

「I-I know!」

As Supervia saw Culotte replace him at the cave entrance, he approached the lookout, who was writhing on the ground, and casually swung his long sword

down at the man's neck.

「Gah~!」

With the blade of the longsword, head of the lookout rolled to the ground while leaving a trail of blood.

「Urrghhhhkk~!」

Though he had seen dead monsters, It was the first time Arogan had seen a dead human. Arogan ran towards the shadows while vomiting.

While looking at Arogan with a complex expression, Supervia strained his ears to listen to the sounds in the cave.

Fortunately, though the lookouts had died, only shouts of happiness and laughter could be heard.

In such a situation, the rear guard joined up.

「Where is Culotte?」

「She's gone inside as planned in the strategy.」

While answering Rei, Supervia looked at Scola and Firuma.

Firuma didn't seem to feel any guilt from killing a person. Or maybe she just had enough mental strength to hide it. However, Scola was clearly looking pale.

「Scola too.」

To Supervia's words, Rei looked at Arogan, who was still vomiting in the shadows.

「It seems so. It's because the lookout survived the magic that was used.」

「Well, it was the first time he's had to kill someone. It's not unreasonable.」

「Supervia seems to be calm.」

「I've become used to it. Speaking of which, you don't seem to mind it either?」

「Well, I wonder.....so, you've come back.」

Noticing Culotte coming back with silenced footsteps, Rei ended the conversation. While they had a surprised look, they understood as the person in question came out of the cave.

「How was it?」

At Rei's question, Culotte gave a small nod.

「There's one main path ahead. However, it later splits into 3 passages. On the right path, there seems to some people who maybe merchants who have been captured. Because there were guards, I couldn't see exactly how many were captured. The middle path is quite wide, the sounds of reveling were coming from there. Also, the left side seems to be some sort of armoury and storage area.」

「Number of bandits?」

「There's slightly less than 30 people.」

「I see. Are there any other exits to the outside?」

「I didn't check as I didn't have enough time.」

「In that case, should we try to kill as many thieves as possible at first contact?」

「However, it won't be as easy if there are merchants taken as hostages.」

To Rei's murmur, Supervia spoke up.

「Well, that's true.Culotte, do you know if there are any side paths that go from the prison to the area where they are partying?」

「I said it before but I don't know as there was no time. But you're asking for my personal opinion, as they're not expecting a subjugation force to come, I don't think they would be able to respond to an emergency situation.」

「In that case.....Culotte, you have to head to the prison first to secure the prisoners. After that.....Gran, what will you do?」

When he called out into the darkness, Gran came out with a wry smile.

「I didn't expect to be noticed. So, what do you want?」

「After we rescue the hostages, can we leave them to you or is it considered part of the rank up test?」

「No, you cant. My role is strictly to ascertain whether you have the ability to go up to D rank. I'm not supposed to help if there is no compelling reason. So, in other words, the current situation isn't important enough.」

「.....It can't be helped. Though it's regrettable to reduce our combat power, Culotte, after rescuing the prisoners, come back here and hide yourself.」

「I understand.」

「Okay, we'll enter the cave. As I said at noon, Arogan and Supervia will take the vanguard. Center are Scola and Firuma. I'll be the rear guard.....can you do it?」

Arogan's nausea had finally settled and Rei called out to him as he returned. Arogan nodded with a bitter expression.

「Ah, I'll do it.」

「Scola, you?」

「I-I'm fine. I'll manage it somehow.」

Giving Scola some time, he started to feel better than before.

「Okay, we'll rush in.」

At Rei's cue, they rushed into the cave.

Chapter 53

Because the entrance was narrow, Culotte went in first to check if there were any lookouts. After that, Supervia, Arogan, Scola, and Firuma entered in that order. Rei entered last.

「.....It's narrow.」

In the cave, it was only wide enough for two people to walk side by side. There was only enough space for one person to fight freely.

Checking the situation, Rei spoke.

「Supervia, Arogan, Firuma and Scola, follow me. As for Culotte, her top priority is to secure the prisoners. After that, she will hide herself in the shadows of the lookout.」

「.....A little while ago, Arogan vomited in the shadows.....」

Though Culotte said that displeased, thinking about having to fight in the forest to protect the merchants, who were probably amateurs at fighting, she decided to hide herself in the end.

「Okay, let's go. It's a race against time with this. If you find a bandit, kill them without hesitation. If you delay, they'll warn their fellow bandits, so if possible, kill them before they say anything.I will launch a surprise attack at the place they are partying. The fight shouldn't take too long.」

Everyone nodded at Rei's words, Culotte advanced to the right passageway where the prison was.

Rei saw that before quickly taking the middle passageway while trying to make as little noise as possible.....

「-!?」

As Supervia approached the front, Rei waved his hand to stop him.

「Here they are.」

「Number of enemies?」

「I haven't counted but there should be roughly 30 bandits as Culotte said.

Almost everyone is drunk, but there are also some who aren't.」

「Okay, the first time, you two took out the lookouts in the preemptive attack. This time, I'll participate. I, Scola and Firuma will attack with magic and arrows to throw the bandits into confusion. Using the confusion, Supervia and Arogan will move in, I'll stay back to protect the back line.」

Everyone nodded at Rei's instructions, Supervia and Arogan prepared their weapons, ready to rush in at any time. Firuma set up her bow and Scola started to cast a spell.

Rei saw that and returned the Mithril Knife, which was hard to maneuver in the cave, to his waist and took out the Death Scythe, which was also a magic casting tool.

『Flame, burn the enemy according to my thoughts.』

At the same time, he said an incantation. A 30cm diameter fireball appeared in front of Rei, rapidly raising the temperature.

Rei glanced at Scola for a moment, he nodded back when he had finished his incantation.

『Fireball.』

First to be released was Rei's fireball. It hit the center of a group of 5 people who were drinking. The first bandit to be hit by the fireball burned up in an instant, his life promptly leaving him. The bandits who were around the man hit by the fireball received both small and large burns.

「What? Enemy attack!? Everyone.....」

A man near the burning bandits tried to order an interception at once, but was shot in the head by Firuma's arrow.

「Enemy attack, it's an enemy attack! Stop them!」

As expected, even though they were drunk, they realised that they were being attacked. A man with a huge body, who seemed to be the leader, shouted instructions from the back of the room.

Men in the vicinity with swords, axes and clubs, obeyed the order and turned towards the entrance to the hall. However, as if waiting for that, Scola's magic

was cast.

『Wind Blow』

An invisible fist made of wind. The closest bandits were beaten down by several dozen wind fists.

Though it's killing power was nowhere near Rei's fireball, it had several times the range compared to fireball.

「Ahhhh! It's a monster, a monster is attacking!」

Beaten by the wind fists, a man who saw his friend hit in the stomach before falling down unconscious involuntarily yelled out.

His words that there was a monster only further confused the bandits.

「This idiot. There are no monsters that use wind and fire magic around here! Besides, there's an enemy using a bow. Get a grip on yourselves!」

The leader shouted, however, it was no easy task to restore order to those who had fallen into confusion. If they were trained soldiers or adventurers then maybe, but not for bandits.

And.....

「Go!」

At the same time as Rei's sharp shout, Supervia and Arogan plunged in the bandits with their weapons.

「Hah, damn. I'll do it. I'll do it!」

While partially in desperation.....no, Arogan had finally resolved himself to kill people. Using his magic sword, he slashed the belly of a nearby bandit.

「Gyaa~!」

As expected of a magic sword, a single slash cut the body of the bandit into top and bottom without any resistance.

The male bandit died while splattering his offal and blood into the surroundings, Arogan experienced killing someone for the first time in his life.

「Arogan, don't become absent minded. There's still enemies!」

Supervia shouted while driving his long sword into a nearby bandit's head and hurling a dagger at a bandit who was trying to ready a bow.

As for Arogan, he understood Supervia's worried words and knew it wasn't the time to fight about it. He wielded his magic sword desperately against the bandits.

To support the two, Scola attacked with wind and water magic. At the same time, Firuma covered the two who were fighting at the front by shooting arrows given the wind attribute from her magic bow.

「Hey, first take out the 3 people at the back!」

According to their leader's instructions, several bandits jumped at Scola and Firuma, however.....

「If there's this much space, there's no problem.」

Holding the Death Scythe, Rei block the bandits.

「Get out of the way you damn brat!」

Receiving a surprise attack in the middle of their feast followed by fear and anxiety as their friends were killed, they were filled with anger. A male bandit, with bloodshot eyes, swung his axe down at Rei's head, who was standing in the way to protect Scola and Firuma.

Though Rei was holding a huge scythe, his height was only up to the bandit's chest, he also seemed to have a delicate build. He was convinced that he could kill Rei in a single blow.

But.....

「It's 3rd class to judge people by their appearance.」

Kin~! With a metallic sound, the falling axe head hit the blade of the Death Scythe.

.....No. Rather than blocking it, the axe that was swung at the magic boosted blade of the Death Scythe went past it. It snapped right in two from the weight of the magic boosted Death Scythe.

「Impossible!」

Seeing a scene he did not expect, Rei's Death Scythe cut down like the grim reaper at the bandit who was frozen in shock.

「Gah~!」

The bandit's body was cut, split into top and bottom as his life left him.

(That said, I don't know what will happen in this melee. I should use it just in case of an emergency.)

Inwardly muttering, he activated the skill he had recently learned.

「Magic Shield!」

At the same time Rei triggered the skill, a shield of light appeared. The shield would move as to not interfere with Rei's attacks, it would also move automatically to protect him if he was attacked.

「Rei, that was.....」

Though Firuma raised a voice of surprise at Rei's magic shield, judging that there was no time, she immediately notched an arrow and shot a bandit that was heading for Arogan.

While some of the bandits were beginning to recover from the confusion, it was still hard to say if they had fully recovered. After all, the men had drank a lot of alcohol, because of their intoxication, they couldn't sober up immediately as the enemy came.

Whether Arogan and Supervia understood it or not, they tried to end it quickly. The magic sword cut an enemy in two while the long sword cut off necks and limbs.

「Damn, they have considerable skill. And there's even 2 mages? Isn't this overkill for a bandit subjugation!」

The leader spat out as he looked at the three people who were blocking the exit from the hall.

「You with the bow! Take out the guy blocking the entrance!」

According to the leader's instructions, several bandits drew their bows fully and aimed at Rei.

「I see, I see, then let's do this. Flying Slash!」

Rei didn't miss hearing the leader's instruction and wielded the big Death Scythe while invoking the skill.

The slash flew forward, slashing 3 bandits who had readied their bows.

Though it's level wasn't at a stage where it could kill in a single blow, it could still give a large wound, having the same effect as a bow in this battle wasn't possible.

「Rei!」

A voice like a scream came from Firuma's mouth. It was because she saw a bandit aiming a bow at Rei while hiding behind the dead bodies of his companions.

Though she aimed her bow at the bandit, it was a moment too late and the arrow had already been fired.

Firuma's arrow immediately pierced the head of the bandit who had shot the arrow, killing him. However, it wasn't possible to stop the fired arrow. The figure of Rei pierced by the arrow flashed through her mind. But.

「Don't worry, there are no problems here.」

To Firuma, who had her eyes shut, Rei's usual calm voice was heard.

Firuma question the scene that appeared in front of her as she opened her eyes, the magic shield blocked the arrow before disappearing into mist.

「You understand? First give priority to reducing the number of enemies. The bandits are slowly recovering from their confusion.」

「Eh, yes.」

Nodding, Firuma gathered her thoughts together and looked towards the hall.

(Because it's inside a cave, the power of the wind spirits are weak. Still, there's a danger if I use the power of the spirits of the land carelessly.....no, I should interfere with ground rather than the cave itself.

『Spirits of the land, Earth Spear!』

The spirits of the land responded to Firuma's call, 1m long earthen spears

with sharp points like swords sprung up from the bandits feet.

「Uwaa~!」

「Hey, what is that!?」

「Damn, what is happening!」

「Retreat, get out of the way!」

Seeing several companions stabbed by earthen spears that had suddenly come out from the ground, the bandits fell into confusion again.

The new confusion that came about just as they had recovered from the confusion of the surprise attack brought the bandits to despair.

「Uooooohhhhh!」

Seeing a friend pierced by a earthen spear from below, a bandit instinctively jumped back. Arogan raised a shout as he stabbed the nearby bandit.

In addition, while leaving his companion to fight Arogan and Supervia, there was a bandit who didn't want to stay here any longer and ran towards the exit of the hall, however.....

『Ice Needle』

He fell to the ground as his whole body was skewered by dozens of ice needles launched by Scola.

「Damn, hey. You and you. Come with me. Don't let those guys see you.」

While almost in a state of panic, the bandits near the exit of the hall where mowed down by Scola's magic, Firuma's arrows and Rei's huge scythe. Meanwhile, the leader ordered his aides in lowered tones.

Maybe the two understood what their leader was thinking. Giving a small nod, they erased their signs and moved to the interior of the cave.

A secret only the leader and his aides knew. That is, a secret escape path from the hall.

In the case of an emergency, only they would survive at the expense of their subordinates. Because of this, the secret passage leading to the outside of the hall was concealed at the beginning when this place was decided to be their stronghold.

The of bandits left in the hall were already down to 10. Most had yet to sober up from their intoxication. They began to attack the party that had launched the surprise attack in partial desperation. As for the people who knew about the passageway, other than the leader's group, the rest were all dead. If they could quickly escape from here, they could reorganize the bandit group from scratch.

While thinking that in his mind, so as to be not noticed by the people rampaging in the hall, the leader moved further into the cave.

However, naturally, there was someone who wouldn't miss this.

「.....There are 7 people left in the hall. Can you manage them?」

「Eh? Yes. Though it should be okay.....why this all of a sudden?」

Firuma asked while shooting an arrow into a bandit's arm.

「No, it seems a rat is trying to sneakily escape. I will dispose of them. Once more, just in case.....Magic Shield.」

「Huh? A rat?」

Paying no attention to Firuma's puzzled voice, after creating another magic shield, which Firuma saw earlier, he kicked against the ground while wielding the Death Scythe. He went towards the fight between Arogan, Supervia and two bandits as he headed further in.

「Wai-, Rei!?」

「Uwa~, both of you take care. Rei's going further in!」

At Firuma's puzzled voice and Scola's shout to the vanguard, Rei narrowed the distance.....

「Shoes of Sleipnir, start.」

The effect of the magic item Shoes of Sleipnir allowed him to run through the air. Jumping once and twice, he jumped over the fight zone.

「Huh?」

「What!?」

Though Arogan and Supervia called out to Rei from behind, he paid no attention to them and with his 3rd and 4th steps.....landed back on the ground.

That's right, he landed in front of the bandit leader and his aides who were

secretly trying to sneak out.

Chapter 54

「.....What do you want, you.」

The bandit leader couldn't believe what he had seen with his own eyes.

What the leader saw in front of his eyes was a kid in his mid teens, that was the only thing that made sense though.

Running through the air, even though the leader had spent a long time as a bandit in the underworld, this was the first time he had seen such a thing.

「Well, what do I want to do, is it. Anyway, I'm here to stop you from running away.」

Holding the Death Scythe in his hands while the magic shield followed him, he looked at the bandit leader and his two aides.

「First of all, making their subordinates fight and running away by himself..... how does such a person lead a group of bandits?」

「Sh-shut up! The only bandit that needs to survive is me! Hey, you. Attack him together! We'll be able to escape if we take him out.」

Shouting to his aides, the leader readied his huge battle axe.

「Heh~, you still want to do it.Well, the purpose is to exterminate all the bandits, surrendering, escaping or dying a honourable death, the result doesn't change.」

「So noisy! Do you think we're scared just because you can fly in air for a while!? Hey, go!」

「Ah.」

「Tch, do we have no choice.」

The two aides held a long sword and a spear in their hands, they both attacked Rei at the same time.

The man with the spear took advantage of the range of his spear to stab at Rei's body without interfering with his companions' attacks.

The other man swung his sword at Rei's legs from the right.

Finally, the bandit leader swung his battle axe down, aiming to split Rei's head with his prided physical strength.

「Your cooperation is insufficient.」

Stopping the spear stab with the magic boosted Death Scythe, he cut off the spear head before instantly shifting the handle of the Death Scythe to block the sword aimed at his feet. The leader's battle axe, that was aimed at Rei's head, was blocked by the magic shield.

「What!?!」

He gave cry in stunned voice. However, Rei didn't care and used the Death Scythe to cut off the head of the man who held the sword before taking a quick step forward and slashing down at the head of the man with the spear, splitting him left and right.

The man with the sword fell to the ground while spewing blood from his neck. The body of the man with the spear fell to the left and right, offal and blood spilling onto the ground.

「Wh-what did you do!?!」

As the leader of the bandits said that, he immediately retreated and brandished his battle axe, more shocked that his attack was blocked than the fact that both his aides were dead.

Though the organs and blood of the man with the spear was spilled at his feet, the leader desperately searched for a chance to escape from Rei without minding that.

「Well, what did I do indeed.」

Muttering, Rei saw the magic shield disappear into mist.

He wanted to create another magic shield again but the leader would notice that it was some sort of magic if he did that. Flicking the blood off the Death Scythe, he pointed the tip of the blade at the leader.

「Guh~, damn, damn, damn this asshole! We had been doing well up until you interfered. Why did you guys have to come!」

The leader ran towards him brandishing his large battle axe while shouting.

Maybe knowing that he couldn't escape, he seemed to have lost his temper.

Seeing such a leader, Rei was amazed.

「To begin with, if you hated being subjugated, you should have just worked honestly. Is it okay if you kill people and bad if you are killed?」

「Shut up you brat! Speaking like that to your seniors! Get out of the way now!」

He swung down the battle axe while shouting. However, the attack wasn't fast, neither was it powerful or skillful. It was just an attack with nothing but his physical strength.

「.....It's unsightly, you have been caught and punished for your own crimes.....die.」

The attack of the battle axe was caught by the handle of the Death Scythe, parrying it. With one strike, the blade slashed out, cutting off the leader's head and sending it flying.

A few seconds later, the headless body of the bandit leader fell to the ground, spewing blood.

Confirming that, Rei turned to where the melee had been going. It had already finished, all the bandits had been turned into corpses.

「Now then. It seems it's time to clean up, somehow.」

Swinging the Death Scythe once, he flicked the blood off the blade.

Though if the enemies were monsters, they would have started dismantling them, as expected, there were no materials to strip from humans and doing so would be in bad taste.

(Well, I wonder if I can dismantle Orc without feeling anything because they are demi-humans.)

「That's right. I never thought we'd be able to take out 30 people.....so, what do we do now?」

Supervia asked while moving closer to Rei.

「That's right, collect the corpses to the center of the hall.」

「Huh? Why do we have to do something that time consuming?」

At Rei's words, Arogan interjected, saying it would be really troublesome.

From his appearance, the impact he had received after his first kill in combat could not be seen.

(No, it's because he's still in a state of excitement from the battle. Perhaps tonight was too intense.)

Accepting that he could kill people or not. If he could, he would be able to continue as an adventurer, if not, he would not be able to progress as an adventurer.

「Are you sure? What do you think will happen if you left 30 corpses here. 」

「Then, well, they would rot.」

「.....That's why I was saying.」

「Huh? So what were you saying?」

In place of Rei, who sighed as if there was no hope, Scola explained to Arogan.

「If you leave corpses in that state, although it's only a possibility, they could become undeads like Zombies and Skeletons.....didn't you know? In addition, rotting corpses also spread diseases. Though it's probably okay as this place is 2 days away from Gimuru, it would be bad if a strange disease spreads around.」

「Seriously, I get it. I'll gather the corpses. So, what next after they're gathered?」

Storing the Death Scythe into the Misty Ring, Rei answered while pulling the corpse of the leader.

「A simple story. I'll burn them. I won't leave even bones.」

「-!?I understand.」

Overwhelmed by the pressure he saw in Rei's eyes, Arogan half dragged the body of one of the leader's aides to the center of the hall.

Scola, Supervia and Firuma also saw that and began to gather the bandit corpses to the center of the hall in silence.

Meanwhile, Rei called out to Scola, who's face was flushed as he pulled a corpse, due to his lack of strength.

「Scola, please inform Gran and Culotte that the bandit subjugation has been completed. At the same time, check the supply area with Culotte.」

「Ah, okay. I understand.」

Scola was a pure mage, he wasn't good at physical labour. And more importantly, Scola was moving the corpses of the people he had killed. Arogan was the same, Rei didn't know what would happen once the excitement from battle died down.

「Aren't you nice.」

Firuma whispered into Rei's ear.

Rei shook his head with a wry smile at the situation.

「Not really. In the first place, he's a pure mage and is not suited to do physical labour. Even if he isn't here, the work efficiency doesn't change.」

「.....Just saying, I'm also a back line person.」

「Since you use a bow as a ranger, don't you have more physical strength than Scola?」

In compensation for hurting a girl's feelings with his words, Firuma got Rei to promise to give her some freshly baked cookies when they returned to the city of Gimuru.

「It's become quiet inside the cave.」

Outside the cave, Culotte muttered from the shadows of the lookout building.

「Culotte-san, is the wound on your arm okay?」

An man in his twenties, who was hiding at the back, whispered anxiously.

Culottes right arm had been scratched by a dagger, first aid had been applied by wrapping a cloth around it. Though she originally wanted to heal it with a potion, Culotte had only prepared one potion this time and a merchant that had been caught by the bandits had suffered a serious injury.

Therefore, the potion had been used there. She was only able to stop the bleeding from the wounds she had received from fighting the bandits while guarding the merchants.

「I'm sorry, there are potions in our belongings that were stolen from us, but.」

「Seriously. We owe you, young miss. Getting your help, saving us from the bandits, and giving us your potion. We will return the favour by all means.」

The behind the first man who had whispered earlier, another person called out to Culotte. The man had an atmosphere of a stubborn father and was in his mid forties. Though there was a large amount of blood on his clothes, he didn't seem to have a pained appearance. This was the merchant Culottes had used her potion on, the reason for the blood was his injury.

There were two people next to her. Because she was appointed by Rei, who was the party leader, to guard to the merchants, Culotte was able to shelve her feeling of guilt and fear from killing the enemies that had been guarding the merchants.

And, as a thief, when Culotte heard footsteps coming close, she reflexively held up her dagger.

The two merchants saw that and hid back into the shadows of the lookout building so as to not interfere with her. But.....

「What.」

Then, noticing that the footsteps were from someone she knew, she lowered her guard while exhaling in relief.

「Culotte-san?」

「Young miss?」

As the two people she was guarding called out to her, she nodded with a smile.

「It's all right. It's my companion.」

Culotte's words were proven at once. Scola poked his head out from the inside of the cave to check the safety of the surroundings.

「Scola, over here.」

「Ah, Culotte. It's good you're safe.....no, you've been injured. Give me a moment.」

Scola noticed that she had a cloth tied to her right arm to stop the bleeding and hurriedly moved to Culotte with his cane.

「Please. As expected, I was a little nervous.」

「It seems to be so, Culotte. Here it goes.」

They looked at each other with a bitter smile. After the two had experienced killing someone for the first time, because they had known each other for a long time, they both smiled to tell the other not to worry.

Scola erased his bitter smile immediately as he focused on Culotte's arm and began an incantation to a spell.

『Water, be merciful and bestow healing to the person.』

According to Scola's spell, a blue light gathered on the tip of his cane, eventually moving to Culotte's right arm.

『Aqua Healing』

At the same time the magic was cast, the blue light entered the wound.....the pain that Culotte had felt naturally subsided.

Exhaling in relief, she undid the cloth that had been tied to stop the bleeding. There wasn't a single scar, just the original, beautiful, skin.

「Heh~, a mage that can use healing magic. Not bad.....」

To the middle aged man's compliment, Scola's cheeks grew red from embarrassment. Different from her previous wry smile, Culotte spoke up with a real smile.

「So, what are you here for?」

「Ah, oh yeah. Instructions from Rei. We have to go check the storage area.」

「Hmm. The the bandits have been dealt with?」

「Yes. Really, everyone was awesome. In particular, Rei used some sort of magic item and ran through the air.」

「.....As usual, he's not normal. Well, I understand what happened. You're coming with me just in case. You two come as well. You want to get back your belongings?」

At Culotte's words, the merchants involuntarily opened their eyes wide. Generally speaking, if their belongings were stolen by bandits, it was normal to have to pay a corresponding amount of money to have it returned.

However, Culotte asked them to freely enter the cave.

「The party leader, Rei, isn't stingy enough to complain about this.Ah, Arogan might complain though.」

「Fufu~, that may certainly be so. But, Arogan won't go against Rei.」

「That's probably true. There shouldn't be any problems. Come with me.」

In this way, the two merchants followed Culotte back into the cave nervously.

For the sake of precaution, while being cautious of possible remaining bandits, Scola followed at the back .

(.....I understand her feelings but that's a small demerit. Even if she returned their belongings, at least it should be after confirming it with Rei, who is the party leader.)

Gran, who had erased his signs and heard the previous conversation, chased after them while dropping Culotte's mark in his mind by a little bit.

(Well, if you look at exchanging it with the merchants, the demerit isn't too big.)

Leaving aside the evaluation of the fight between the thief and the prison guards, Gran had a good impression from when she rescued the merchants that had been captured.

Chapter 55

The hall of the cave. The corpses of the bandits were stack in a pile there.

Arogan, Supervia, Firuma and Rei had collected them together with a bit of difficulty.

Frowning subtly at the pile of corpses, Rei gave instructions to the other 3.

「Scola and Culotte should have headed towards the warehouse. We'll join them there.」

At Rei's words, Firuma asked curiously.

「That's fine but what about the corpses? Didn't you say we had to burn them?」

「That's true but we'll do that before we leave the cave. If I burnt them now, it would fill the cave with smoke and that would be bad.」

「Ahh, I see. That would be inconvenient for humans.」

Understanding, Firuma nodded as Supervia spoke up.

「Is it different for elves?」

「Mm, that's right. We would still collapse though if we stayed in an area filled with smoke for too long though. However, it won't happen too fast.」

「Hou~, that's convenient for elves.」

「On the other hand, we're weaker than humans in physical strength. In comparison, aren't the number of elven warriors fewer than rangers and mages like me? 」

「No, in the first place, Firuma is the first elf I've ever seen.....」

「Ah, I understand. To begin with, only a small number of elves actually come out of the forests.」

Seeing the two people talking like that, Arogan became annoyed and called out.

「Hey, we can talk about the story later. We have to go to the storage area first. It's too unpleasant to stay here. Damn, my nose has become clogged with the smell of blood.」

「.....Well, what Arogan said is reasonable. It would also be bad if we left Culotte, Scola and the captives for too long. Let go quickly.....」

Speaking up to there, Rei's movements stopped.

Though the three others turned around, puzzled at why Rei had stopped, Rei only had a faint smile on his face.

The reason was because a voice had abruptly resounded in his head. Moreover, it was a familiar voice.

In other words.

【Set has acquired the skill『Poison Claw Lv.1』】

It was an announcement message.

(I see, even if Set and I are separated.....if Set eats a magic stone, it's still possible to acquire a skill. Just finding this out is worth separating from Set for a while.)

「Rei?」

To Supervia's question, Rei shook his head while hiding his thoughts.

「No, it's nothing. Although I felt that there were some bandits remaining, it was probably my imagination. Let's go to the storage area.」

Saying so, they advanced back down the path to the fork in the passage before taking the left path.

「Ah, Firuma. Rei as well.」

Culotte and Scola greeted Rei in front of the storage area. There were also two unfamiliar people.

While expecting that they were probably the captured merchants, Rei asked Culotte.

「So, what's in there?」

「Mm, well. Well, I wonder. Firstly, there are a moderate amount of gold, silver and copper coins, there are some jewels as well. In addition, there are also some cheap magic items. However, strangely, there's a large amount of weapons.」

Look here. They looked inside the storage area at Culotte's prompt. Inside, a large quantity of things such as swords, spears, axes, bows and arrows were stored.

「.....What could this mean? All the bandits we defeated were holding weapons. Yet why is there still a room filled with weapons?」

Rei looked puzzled, similarly, Supervia had a puzzled look after looking inside and made a guess.

「Maybe, they were taken from the merchants they had attacked up until now? Because they would be able to use those as spare weapons and sell them off when they no longer needed them.」

「Well, that may be true normally.....」

While Rei felt that there was something suspicious, Culotte called out to him.

「Hey, I've returned the belongings that were taken from the two people, that's fine right?」

Saying that and looking at the two merchants, they certainly were carrying something like a huge bag on their backs.

Normally, items that were stolen from bandits would have to be bought back at a suitable price, however.....

「That's fine isn't it?」

Rei had no attachment to money than what was necessary and easily nodded.

However, naturally, there was someone who couldn't let this pass quietly.

「Hey, normally, wouldn't they have to pay use to return their belongings? Yet, letting it go so ea.....si.....ly.....」

In the middle of Arogan's words, he probably noticed that Rei had turned to look at him. He gradually lost the will to continue speaking.

Still, being unable to accept their reward being reduced, Arogan turned to Supervia and Firuma.

But it was no use. The reward of the bandit subjugation and rank up test was previously declared as one silver coin. In other words, if you wanted any more

rewards, it would have to be from the bandits treasure. But.

「It's not really a problem is it? It was originally their belongings.」
「I have no objections in particular either.」

As both Supervia and Firuma didn't have any particular objections to Rei's opinion, Arogan was left by himself.

However, if you were to say which adventurer was actually right, Arogan was more correct. Because adventurers did a lot of dangerous work, they may cause trouble to other adventurers if they made promises to rashly.

Fortunately, the two merchants who had been captured were able to properly understand the situation.

「Well now, about that. As you saved our lives, as expected, we would feel guilty if we didn't compensate you. So, how about passing you a reward in commodities once we return to the city of Gimuru? Because we even deal with magic items, I think there will be some goods that you will surely like.....」

When the younger merchant had heard everything, he proposed this to Rei. Hearing magic item, Arogan's face changed to a joyful look.

It was no wonder as magic items were usually very expensive.

After talking about it, it was decided that when they returned to Gimuru, the two merchants would give goods from their store as a reward for saving their lives.

「So, though I heard what you were talking about.....what will we do?」
「What will we do? You mean what will we do with the goods?」
「No, though that's true.....will we take all this back with us? It will be troublesome to take all this to the carriage, it might even be impossible to load everything into the carriage.」
「Ah, I see.」

To Supervia's words, Scola nodded.

Even Culotte, Firuma and Arogan knew that it would be dangerous just to leave the weapons here. A new group of bandits might take up residence here and use those weapons, or maybe Goblins in the forest might arm themselves

with them.

Meanwhile, Rei spoke up while spitting out a sigh.

「It can't be helped. I'll store everything into my item box and take it back to the city. Is everyone okay if we distribute everything after we get back to the city?」

At those words, Arogan nodded with a complex expression while all the others had joyful looks.

Particularly for Supervia, he was looking to replace his long sword with one of the good swords in the storage area as his previous one had been chipped in the fight against the bandits.

After that, Rei walked around the storage area, continuously storing things into his item box.

It should be noted that the two merchants, who didn't know Rei had an item box, were looking him with stunned faces.

Going back to when Rei started moving into the bandit cave.

Scorching Wind and Set, who they were entrusted with, were spending the night in the forest.

Though the request Scorching Wind had received was to subjugate 5 Treants, Treants weren't easily found.

Treants themselves were D rank monsters, they weren't a match for the C rank party, Scorching Wind. Besides, as they had Set, an A rank monster, there were no issues with their combat power.

However, that was in a frontal confrontation. To put it simply, Treants were trees with a face on the trunk. Though they could walk around using their roots, they would be found at once if they did so. However, if they kept quiet without moving, it was very difficult to find them among the ordinary trees growing in the forest. In fact, even Set, who had much sharper senses than humans, was unable to find where the Treants were hiding.

「Ahhhh. I didn't think we wouldn't even find a single Treant in 3 days.」

Milein muttered as she picked up some dead wood and threw it into the fire.

「It can't be helped. In the first place, we knew that Treants would be hard to find.」

Sulunin said that to pacify Milein and held out a cup of tea, that had been made from the boiling water over the fire, to her.

「Thanks. But I didn't think we wouldn't find any up to now. Hey, we found them quite easily when we took a similar request previously.」

「Ah.....that. I'm sure I wasn't the only one who thought that we were going to die that time.」

At Milein's words, the third member of the party, Excel, had a bitter smile as she recalled the event.

It was from when Scorching Wind was still a D rank party. At that time, they had taken a similar Treant subjugation quest, entered the forest, and subjugated them.....after defeating them, they had gone to a nearby lake to take a rest. However, a horse made of water had appeared from the lake. They had encountered a C rank monster, Kelpie.

A Kelpie was a rank C monster. If all three members of Scorching Wind had exerted all their strength, they might have been able to defeat the single Kelpie. However, not much time had passed since they defeated the Treants, therefore, they judged that they couldn't win and ran away.

「Though we managed to escaped from that horse monster, the Kelpie, I can't even remember how we got away.」

「Hahaha. I truly thought we were going to die then.」

「Guru~?」

At Milein and Excel's dry laughter, Set, who had been lying down by the campfire, looked up with a puzzled face.

Milein's previous countenance, disappeared as she lovingly stroked Set's back.

「Ah, again. Set-chan is so cute!」

「Gururu~」

Happy to have his back stroked, Set gave a joyful cry.

However, he still felt lonely that Rei wasn't around. Milein felt that his cry was in lower spirits than usual.

「Seriously, why is Milein so crazy about Set.」

Sulunin smiled wryly as he looked at Milein playing with Set.

To Sulunin's words, Milein's eyes protested.....

「Gurururururururu~!」

Abruptly, Set gave a vigilant growl.

Though Milein didn't understand why he had made that sound for a moment, the next second, she quickly raised up her long sword.

「Both of you, get ready for combat. Apparently we have a welcoming party.」

「Well, well. If possible, I wished the welcoming party would have come during the day.」

「This one is a surprise party, I'm sure.」

While saying so with a light tone, Suluning and Excel directed their eyes towards the dark forest, cane and bow ready.

And.....

「Gururu~!」

Set, who felt something come flying out of the darkness, gave a short cry as he spat out his fire breath from his mouth.

The moment the fire breath came from Set's mouth, the object that had been cutting through the darkness was turned to charcoal.

「.....What, is it just me or has the power of the Fire Breath gone up since I last saw it at the Orc village?」

He had used Fire Breath against the Orc Archer in the battle against the Orcs led by the Orc King. However, Set's Fire Breath now was clearly more powerful and had a longer range than what Sulunin had seen at that time.

「Suluin, now's not the time to be fascinated by Set.Here they come!」

Instead of a nice smile, Set directed a ferocious smile at the enemy, like a carnivore before it's prey. Milein directed her gaze to the monsters coming out

from the darkness as she smiled.

What came out were Treants, which were the target of Scorching Wind's subjugation request.However.

「There are 6 Treants! However, one of the Treants I've never seen before. It's probably a rare species!」

5 ordinary Treants could be seen. That was fine, but at the back, there was a Treant with strange appearance that seemed to be directing the other Treants. The surface of that Treant was a dark colour, unlike ordinary Treants. Not only Milein, but the other 2 people in Scorching Wind as well, intuitively understood that it possessed poison.

「Seriously, I didn't think it was possible for a rare species to appear.」
「You're right. These days, there have been rumors of an increasing number of rare species.....apparently it seems to be true.」
「But poison, give me a break.....」

A rare species would normally be a tricky existence of a C rank party to deal with.Yes. Normally that is.

「Gururururururu~!」

Set stood at the front of Scorching Wind, at the same time, he raised a cry that resounded through the forest, he used King's Awe.

At this point, the Treants' movements visibly dulled. With the Treants' dulled movements, they weren't able to hit Scorching Wind or to evade their attacks.

And.....

「Gururururu~!」

With a sharp cry, Set restrained several Treants with Wind Arrow. The Treants who had their movements dulled by King's Awe were unable to evade the attack and had their surfaces cut by the wind arrows.

「Gururururu~!」

Next, Set swiped with his eagle like forefoot. With that alone, a Treant was broken and blown away.

Though a Treant shot a vine out, like it did in from the darkness before, it was instantly turned to charcoal as Set used Fire Breath again.

His way of fighting the Treants, rather than protecting Scorching Wind, it was more to vent his anger at being separated from Rei. His cries sounded like he close to going wild from displeasure.

Finally, he broke a third Treant in half while Scorching Wind took out two Treants. As for the poison carrying Treant rare species, Set pierced the center of it's body with his sharp beak, gouged out it's magic stone and swallowed it, killing it at the same time.

【Set has acquired the skill『Poison Claw Lv.1』】

「Gururu~!」

The announcement message was only audible by Rei and Set. Seeing him give a happy cry, the rest of Scorching Wind could only give a wry smile.

Moreover, Milein nodded happily at Set's brave figure.

「Ah.....first of all, let's gather the proofs of subjugation before it's too late.」

Milein called out to Excel, who was looking at Set with amazed eyes.

As for Excel, there was no helping it. They cut off the single bud that would only appear once on each Treant as proof of subjugation.

In addition, it should be noted that aside from being the proof of subjugation, they were also an expensive material for potions and could be sold for a large amount of money, the branches of the Treant could also be used for canes and bows. For Scorching Wind, which had a tendency to run out of money, the Treants were a splendid monster.

「.....If possible, I wanted the magic stone of the rare species.」

「It can't be helped. In the first place, we weren't the ones that defeated the rare species.」

Milein retorted back to Sulunin's words as they collected the materials, magic stones and proofs of subjugation for the request.

【Set】

『Water Ball Lv.1』『Fire Breath Lv.2』『Wind Arrow Lv.1』『King's Awe Lv.1』
『Poison Claw Lv.1』new

【Death Scythe】

『Corrosion Lv.1』『Flying Slash Lv.1』『Magic Shield Lv.1』

Poison Claw: Claws can secrete poison. Enemies struck by the claw will be poisoned. The strength of the poison depends on the level.

Chapter 56

Gimuru, the only city in the territory of Margrave Rowlocks. Two carriages were travelling along the highway to the city of Gimuru.

With clouds high above in the blue sky, the two carriages traveled along the road slowly.

「Ah, we should see the city shortly.」

On the larger of the two carriages, Gran gave a mutter.

The outer walls of the city of Gimuru became visible from the window.

「Ah, I'm tired. Even though it was for the rank up test, as expected, we had to go out for a few days.」

Given a sense of relief upon seeing the outer wall, Culotte murmured involuntarily.

「Though it certainly was tiring.....but it was still good. The merchants who were captured are all safe.」

「That's true. But to think that the bandits didn't use the carriage.」

Yes. The carriage was something Rei found after subjugating the bandits, after the two merchants had been caught, their carriage had been hidden in the forest intact. The bandits may have thought the carriage could be used to carry the stuff they stole from other people. Because of that, they let the two merchants ride in that carriage, avoiding the situation of cramming everyone into the guild carriage.

As the city of Gimuru, which they were returning to, came into view, Gran knocked on the carriage walls to alert Supervia and Rei, who were sitting in the drivers area.

「Can you hear me Rei and Supervia?」

「Ah.」

「No Problem」

Nodding at the answer from the driver's seat, Gran spoke up.

「Now then, since we can see the city of Gimuru, I'll keep explaining as we go back. It's not a complicated discussion though. We will disband when we return to the guild today. Afterwards, please get your reward from the reception desk. After that, we will gather back in the guild meeting room tomorrow afternoon. Before I forget about it, the results of the rank up test will be announced then. Well, it's nice and simple. Any questions?」

Culotte spoke up at Gran's words.

「What about the valuables we took from the bandit hideout?」

「I don't care, that's up to you guys to deal with. However, don't do anything that will cause trouble or a dispute.」

「I understand. Then, if we're disbanded at the guild, can we divide everything earlier?」

The people in the carriage nodded at Culotte's words. Rei and Supervia, who were in the driver's seats, had no objections and didn't say anything.

「Then, it's decided. Rei, did you hear it? After we disband at the guild.....ah, where should we divide the items? We can't possibly do it in the guild.....」

There were some nasty adventurers who would put on airs due to their rank and were lawless. If they clearly showed this big bait in front of them.....Culotte could imagine they would get into trouble in future.

「That's right, we'll let you use the meeting room on the 2nd floor of the guild. Though taking and moving that amount of stuff will be hard, that amount is that amount, you'll have to do something about it one way or another.」

Gran gave out a helping hand to Culotte.

「Eh? Really? Then it's not necessary to worry about the valuables. Thank you Gran.」

「What, this is just much better compared to purposely stirring up trouble in the guild.」

「What, we.....ah, well that's true. It might get a little dangerous with Arogan.」

「Hey, why only me.」

Arogan and Culotte were arguing jokingly. The situation was clearly less insidious than at the beginning of the rank up test.

That was a matter of course. Every night for the past few days, since annihilating the bandits, Arogan, Culotte and Scola had been unable to sleep well and had talked to each other about their true feelings when they had killed the bandits. As a result, the three.....or rather Arogan and Culotte, found mutual understanding instead of their previously insidious relationship.

(.....Honestly speaking, I would have wanted to start the rank up test immediately if it had been possible. Well, those two are similar in the sense that they are stubborn.)

Rei listened to the exchange in the carriage behind him with a wry smile.

Because the possibility of monsters attacking this close to the city of Gimuru was low, Rei was currently admiring the surroundings rather than paying attention to the area around him.

「.....Rei.」

Supervia spoke to Rei in low tones so as to not let the people behind them hear.

「Is there something wrong?」

「No, it's just.....how to say it. I've been thinking about various things. I thought I was strong, and in fact, at Rank E I may be strong without a doubt. But this time, I was reminded how small the world that is Rank E actually is.」

「Really?」

From Rei's perspective, Supervia's ability was quite high. At the very least, it was better than the abilities of all the arrogant people in the Rank D party Claws of the Hawk.

「Therefore, well, I just wanted to say that this has been a very good learning experience.」

「If you think so then isn't that fine? I didn't do anything special in particular.」

Thus, in the short time before arriving at the city of Gimuru, they spent the time talking to each other about the fights they experienced and past times where they had fought in close combat.

「Ah, Rei-kun. Welcome back. Was the rank up test successfully completed?」

When the carriage arrived at the main gate, Ranga's familiar voice called out.

「Ahh, it was successful. There weren't any injuries either, there should be no complaints about passing the test.....」

While talking, he held out his guild card.

Nearby, the others in the carriage also handed their guild cards to the guards.

「By the way, have you seen Set?」

「Set hasn't left town today. Since returning with Scorching Wind from a subjugation quest yesterday, he's been resting in the stables.」

「I see, I understand. Has he acted violently or anything of the sort?」

「No, there hasn't been any commotions. 」

Rei let out a sigh of relief at Ranga's words.

Even if he said that Set was as smart as a human, he was still slightly worried about leaving him for so long.

「Yes, here. You may pass.」

Receiving permission to pass, the carriage entered into the city.

It should be noted that the merchants' carriage had to go through a more complex procedure than adventurers and so they split up there.

Going straight down the street to the guild after entering the city, everyone took their belongings down from the carriage.

Of course, all of Rei's belongings were stored in the Misty Ring, because the Death Scythe was too unwieldy in the city, it was also stored into the Misty Ring. He was completely empty handed. With regards to weapons, he only had the Mithril Knife at his waist.

Gran called out to everyone after they had unloaded their belongings from the carriage.

「Okay, the rank up test has been hard. Well, we'll disband here.As I said in the carriage previously, you can collect your reward at the reception. At the same time, in regards to the procedure to use the meeting room, I don't mind. Now then, dismissed.」

After Gran said so, he quickly entered the guild. As the test examiner, it seemed that he had a lot of work to do.

「Now then, first let's receive our rewards.」

「Right. 1 silver coin to laugh about is 1 silver coin to cry about.」

TLN: In other words, it's not much but it's your loss if you don't get it.

At Culotte's proposal, Arogan agreed while saying that.

When they all entered the guild, as it was during the day, the figures of other adventurers could hardly be seen. Several adventurers were slowly eating lunch or looking at the posted requests on the request board.

In such an environment, Rei's group of 6 headed to the counter.

Seeing the appearance of Rei, Lenora and Kenny's faces brightened up.

「Rei-san, welcome back. Was the rank up test completed successfully?」

「Ahh, somehow. So we've come to receive the reward for the rank up test. I heard from the examiner, Gran, that we would be able to get it here.」

「Yes, that's correct. For the time being, please hand over your guild card.」

「Wai-, Lenora. Rei-kun is mine.....」

「Hey, Rei-san was entrusted to me, you should go handle the other people.」

「.....I understand.」

Following Lenora's words, each of the 6 submitted their guild cards to several receptionists.

After receiving the guild card and confirming the documents, they each received one silver coin.

「Congratulations for completing the test. While waiting from the results of the test, please rest your bodies slowly so you're not too tired.」

「Ahh, we've been allowed to use the meeting room above for a little while. Gran has talked to us about it.」

「I understand. there shouldn't be any problem as there aren't any meetings being held today.」

Nodding at Lenora's words, they went up to the second floor up the stairs after receiving their rewards.

「Rei-kun, let's celebrate after you pass the test.」

Kenny's voice could be heard behind him.

「Rei seems to be quite popular. That was a little surprising.」

Firuma looked at Rei interestingly. After that, Culotte gave a rare smile as she spoke up.

「I didn't think Rei had a preference for older girls. I'd better take care and be careful as well.」

「It's not like they love me or anything, they were just joking around.」

「I wonder? Their eyes seemed to be quite serious though.」

Next to speak was Supervia, muttering caustically.

「.....Jealous.」

「Wai-, Supervia!? You had such a character!?!」

「Even if Rei's popularity is surprising, Supervia's character is as well.」

While fooling around like that, They entered the meeting room and tightly closed the door, just in case.

「So, Rei. Please.」

「I understand.」

Prompted by Culotte, weapons, armour, jewelry, money, potions and cheap magic items appeared from the Misty Ring and were placed side by side on top of the meeting room table.

The amount was enough to break a cheap table as it would be unable to withstand the weight. Still, the table bore the weight with no problems, or should it be said, as expected of the table in the adventurers guild meeting room.

Seeing things appear out of nowhere, one after the other, they watched on, partially shocked. However, after about 5 minutes, they began looking over their loot.

「Well then, the question is how to divide this.....divide it into 6 equal parts, is what I'd like to say. First of all.....what does everyone want. I don't need weapons.」

At Rei's words, they each said what they wanted.

Arogan and Culotte took the money. Scola took the potions and cheap magic items. Firuma took the jewels and Supervia took the armour.

「Wait a moment, why do you want money. Shouldn't you take spare weapons or armour?」

「Do I have to say it? It's because there's no good weapons or armour for thieves.」

Arogan and Culotte started arguing again, the other four, including Rei, looked at them amazed.

However, they continued arguing for 5 minutes. After 10 minutes, they began to get tired of it.

「I'll take 10 daggers and 5 spears. Does anyone have any complaints?」

Rei said that and looked at the other 5.

「No, there's no problems with taking the spears and daggers.....」

All the members nodded at Culotte's words.

「Though I don't care about the spears and daggers.....will you use a spear? Because you use that large scythe, it will probably end up as an extra.」

「What, there's plenty of use for it like as a javalin.」

While answering Supervia's question, he stored the 5 spears and 10 daggers on the table into the Misty Ring.

「Now then. As that's my share, you 5 can decide the rest. I have to get back to the inn soon. I'm worried about Set.」

「Ah, Aah.」

「Well, it should be fine Rei.」

As Arogan nodded, partly due to the pressure, Firuma answered saying that there shouldn't be any issues.

As for the other people, they nodded as Rei didn't insist on taking anything that they were aiming for.

In particular was Arogan. As he couldn't use spears, didn't need the cheap

daggers and had his weakness pointed out by Rei, he was quite satisfied.

「Well then, I'll be going back then. See you in the guild tomorrow.」

The 5 people didn't keep him and Rei quickly left.

And after Rei left, the voices of Arogan and Culotte could be heard arguing in the meeting room again.

「Ah, Rei-san. Have you already finished using the meeting room?」

Getting back down to the first floor of the guild, Lenora called out from the counter.

As usual, Kenny also wanted to call out to Rei, however, she sent out a blaming glance at Lenora as she was currently currently working with an adventurer.

「My business is done. However, the other 5 are likely going to be using it for a while.」

「Is that so. Well, That's fine as there are no plans to use the meeting room.」

After that short conversation, Rei left the guild.

Lenora had a smile as saw him off. She more or less knew why Rei was in such a hurry.

After about 10 minutes, Rei appeared in front of the stables at the Dusk Wheat inn.

In his hand, he held about 10 skewers, that Set loved, that he had bought from the stalls.

「Gururururururu~!」

Set gave a loud cry of joy from the stables.

Because of the cry, Lana, the proprietress of the inn, would probably warn Rei for frightening all the horses in the stables.....

But for now, he was just happy at reuniting with Set for the first time in a few days.

Chapter 57

It was the next day after the end of the rank up test. After going out to subjugate bandits and forming a party with people that he had barely met, Rei, who had been the party leader, slept in until noon to recover from the physical and mental fatigue.

After dressing himself, donning the Dragon Robe and putting on the Shoes of Sleipnir, he had a late breakfast, or rather, an early lunch on the first floor of the Dusk Wheat.....finishing that, he went down to the stables.

After Set was warned by Lana, the proprietress, for being too enthusiastic yesterday, as expected, as if settling down after seeing Rei the previous night, Set gave a normal cry.

「Gururu~」

「Ahh, good morning. Now then, I won't be taking a request today but I will be heading to the guild to hear the results of the rank up test, do you want to come along Set?」

「Guru~」

Of course. Nodding at Set while smiling, they left the stables together.

At that point, Rei felt that it wasn't just his imagination that all the horses in the stable seemed to feel relieved.

Maybe because the end of summer was nearing, unlike yesterday's weather, there were thin clouds in the sky today. In such weather, one man and one animal, Rei and Set, went into town.

And with that, while walking to the guild, Rei bought sandwiches and skewers from now familiar food stalls and ate them while the residents of the city of Gimuru gave Set dried meat and bread as the little children played with him. As for people who had come to Gimuru for the first time and did not know Set, people would stop and explain to them if they tried to run away after seeing Set. As one man and one animal walked to the guild like this, it was almost past noon when they arrived at the guild.

「Set, wait for me at the carriage area as usual. However, I might be a bit longer today.....well, there shouldn't be any problems.」

「Guru~」

At any rate, as of now, Set was a relatively famous monster in the city of Gimuru. Though he is an A rank monster, he was friendly to both children and adults. From women and children to the elderly, they were all fans of Set.

.....Well, though there were still some people who believed that monsters were monsters and detested Set, they were only a minority.

There were quite a few people who wanted to play with Set, because of that, the place near the guild where carriages and tamed monsters would stay had secretly become a popular location to pet him.

Knowing that, Rei lightly stroked Set's head before entering the guild.

「Ah, good morning Rei-kun!No, I should say hello instead. Anyway, come here, come here.」

Kenny gave a big wave of her hand from the counter. As her voice went through the guild, Rei attracted the glances of quite a few adventurers.

Opposite to the usual scene that Rei would see, Lenora was the one currently explaining the description of a request to an adventurer.

While thinking of this rare situation, Rei went to Kenny's counter.

「I came to hear the results for the rank up test.」

「Un~, I've heard. Some of the other participants have already come. They're in the meeting room Rei-kun borrowed yesterday.」

「I see.」

Nodding, he was going to head up the stairs when he suddenly stopped.

「That reminds me, do you know how long those guys spent in the meeting room yesterday?」

「Mmm, the elf and a warrior left a little bit after Rei-kun.....」

「How about those three, Arogan, Culotte and Scola?」

「I don't know much about their names but the other warrior and the thief and mage duo remained for a while. Well, it seems in the end they were scolded by

Gran-san.」

「So it happened after all.」

That happened because of their greed. He thanked Kenny with a wry smile before heading to the meeting room on the second floor.

「Ara~, you're late.」

Rei was greeted like so by Firuma.

Firuma had been talking with Culotte in the meeting room while Scola was reading a book on something.

「Is that so? I don't think it's too late as there are still two people who haven't come.」

While replying to Firuma, he sat down on a nearby chair and called out to Culotte.

「You seem to have argued for quite a while yesterday?」

「I know right. We were just talking about that before.」

「Even if you tell me that.....it's bad that Arogan was greedy.」

「I think both of you are to blame. So, how was it split in the end?」

「.....Still ongoing. We will resume the discussion after today's announcement.」

「Well, though I can't say much as I've already got my share.....I don't think it's a good idea to be too greedy.」

「Don't tell that to me, tell that to Arogan.」

「.....That's my line.」

Arogan entered the room disgruntled.

「Although thieves are all greedy, you are exceptional even among them.」

「Wait a moment, what is that supposed to mean!」

「It's just as I said.」

While arguing with Culotte, he sat down next to them.

Though at first glance the situation seemed dangerous like the time at the start of the rank up test, below that, there was trust between two people who had mutually recognized the other.

Rei and Fimura looked at the two, who were arguing of trivialities, in

amazement. Scola, who would usually remonstrate with Culotte, was absorbed in reading a book and seemed to ignore the situation.

「He seems to be quite absorbed in that book over there.」

「Over there? Ahh, it's Scola. A magic book that he had wanted for some time finally got stocked so he bought it first thing this morning.」

「He should have quite a bit of money from the silver coin reward, the potions and cheap magic items from the bandits treasure.」

「Something like that, apparently he was saving up money because he wanted this book.」

「Hee~, it must be about some interesting magic. What kind of magic book is it?」

「It seems to be about Esta Nord, a Majin and one of the most famous alchemists.」

「.....Hou~.」

At those words that came out, Rei froze for a moment.

After all, Esta Nord was the alchemist in Zepairu's organization. In fact, most of the magic items Rei was wearing were Esta Nord's works.

「Rei?」

「No, I was just surprised for a moment as a bigger name than I expected came up. Still, I knew that Scola was a mage that specialised in wind and water magic, but is he also involved in alchemy?」

「What? Instead of asking me, you should ask the person in question. 」

「If you say so. Well, he seems to be absorbed in the book right now.」

In that way, Arogan and Culotte kept arguing and Rei and Firuma chatted while Scola kept reading his magic book. Finally, the last person arrived.

「It seems I'm the last person.」

「That's right. But Gran still hasn't come yet so you shouldn't worry too much about it.」

Supervia said that as he entered the room, wearing different equipment from the day before.

It was still the same leather type armour, but it had been changed to a superior one.

「I see, that's the armour you picked.」

「Ahh.Yesterday was tiring. Of course, the armour was heavy and I had to carry it. After keeping some spares for myself, I sold of the rest to shops but.....」

「Ahh, I see.」

Things like potions and gems don't take up that much space and Rei only took 5 spears and 10 daggers. It wasn't that hard for him to carry around as Rei had the Misty Ring. In comparison, the protective gear that Supervia took was different. Both shields and armour had a considerable weight as they were made from metal and the skin and bones of monsters.

「What's wrong?」

「I called up some acquaintances to help carry them. But I had to give them some money in return.」

At that point, as Rei was talking with Supervia, he heard footsteps coming towards the conference room.

「It seems he's come.」

「What?」

「The person who will tell us whether or not we ranked up.」

Matching Rei's words, Gran entered the room a few second later.

Gran looked around the meeting room and after confirming that all the rank up test participants were here, spoke up.

「Okay, everyone is here. Then, the results of the test will be announced now.」

At Grans words, the meeting room fell dead silent, filled with tension.

Scola, who had been reading his book without minding his surroundings, now turned his eyes tensely to Gran.

Attracting everyone's attention.....Gran nodded with a smile.

「Congratulations. All of you have been promoted to rank D.」

「YEEESSSS!」

「I did it, I did it.」

「Ahh, that's good.....」

「It's seems I've done it somehow.」

「I'm relieved.」

Arogan, Culotte, Scola and Supervia rejoiced at their rank up in their own ways while Firuma gave a sigh of relief.

Rei also smiled while sighing in relief.

After all, it was his social skills that were being tested as party leader. He would have been more confident if it was testing his strong points, but he was nervous as the test had been on his weak point.

「Congratulations Rei.」

「Ahh, you too as well.」

Rei replied as Firuma congratulated him from nearby while smiling.

「That's enough rejoicing for now. Hey, come here.」

At Gran's voice, a person, who was probably a guild staff member, entered the conference room and approached Rei.

「Everyone, because your rank needs to be updated, please pass your guild cards to this person.」

Following his instructions, they all handed over their guild cards. The guild staff member checked each one as they were handed in to make sure.

「Gran-san, I'll get this done immediately.」

「Ahh, thanks. In the meantime, I'll talk about the test until it's done.」

「Okay, it shouldn't take that long.」

After saying that to the the guild staff member and seeing him off, Gran turned to Rei.

「From today on, you are all rank D adventurers. However, you should remember that there were some dangerous situations in the test. First of all, Rei. As I said before the test, you have no problems regarding combat power. However, at rank D and higher, you will have to participate in groups more often. Though your social interaction was a problem.....and your instructions in combat weren't perfect, it is still a passing grade. Your cooperation with allies

was the same. However, in regards to the exchange with the merchants, particularly regarding the goods, there is a demerit. If you return a merchant's goods for free, it will become a problem if they start demanding the same from other adventurers.Fortunately, it worked out well this time as those merchants understood the problem. So as I said, watch out for that in rank D.]

Rei nodded at Gran's words.

Seeing that, Gran turned his eyes to Culotte.

「Next is Culotte. At the beginning of the rank up test, you were aggressive to Rei and Arogan, probably due to your nervousness. As I said to Rei, there was also the issue of returning the merchants' goods free of charge. However, other than that, your abilities as a thief are worthy of rank D. Continue to work hard in future.」

Culotte also nodded.

Gran turned to look at Scola.

「In your case Scola, your mental weakness is an issue. At any rate, vanguard aside, as a mage in the back, you were troubled after you killed the bandit. Your future task is to improve your mental strength.」

「Yes, I'll do my best.」

Scola answered.

Nodding in satisfaction at the response, Gran looked towards Supervia.

「Next are Supervia and Firuma. Both of you did well to hide your unease even though you had killed a person. If you were to add that to your rank up test mark, you two would come out on top. However, you are still only rank D. From the viewpoint of adventurer, there's still more to the top. Keep working hard in future and don't be satisfied with just this.」

「I will do that.」

「I'll keep that in mind.」

Seeing the two people nod, he finally turned to Arogan.

「In this test, your evaluation was the lowest. You overestimate your own power and look down on others. You were late to the meeting time. You

couldn't communicate well with your party members either. After killing a person, you showed mental weakness. Honestly, the way it was, it wouldn't be wrong to fail you on the rank up test. However, after you talked with Culotte and Scola, you got over your mental weakness of killing people, thanks to that, your interaction within the party also reached the passing grade.However, listen up. You should not forget that you only barely passed the rank up test.]

「.....Ah.」

At Gran's harsh criticism, Arogan nodded with a bitter face.

Making sure he understood, Gran then directed his gaze to everyone in the place.

「At any rate, from today on, you are all rank D adventurers. You will now be seen as fully fledged adventurers who are past the beginners and rookies of rank E. However, you should not forget to conduct yourselves.Especially Arogan, you must always be conscious of this.」

「Sorry for making you wait.」

As Gran's words finished, with good timing, the previous staff member came back.

In his hand, he held six guild cards, which he returned to each person.

All the ranks on the guild card had been changed from E to D. They all smiled when they realised that they had all ranked up.

It was the same even for Rei, who usually didn't have too much change in his facial expression.

「Okay, that's the end of the rank up test! I expect you to play an active role in future. Dismissed!」

In accordance with his words, each person stood up and left the meeting room. Arogan and Culotte continued on from yesterday while Scola pulled out his book.

As for Rei, as he stood up to follow them.....Gran called out.

「Rei, you remain here. We have to talk for a bit.」

Gran said that with a rather serious look.

Chapter 58

The rank up test had been successfully completed and he had passed, his rank increasing to rank D. But after being dismissed.....a voice spoke up to stop Rei from leaving the meeting room. It was Gran, who had also been the rank up test examiner.

「Are there any issues with the rank up?」

Gran shook his head at Rei's question. Glancing at the staff member who had brought the guild cards in earlier, the staff member gave a small nod in understanding and left the meeting room.

Sending him off, Gran checked to make sure the meeting room door was closed properly before sitting down in the seat that Rei had sat in before.

「Rei, there's something important to discuss.」

Rei immediately understood that his face wasn't a joking one. Because of that, he sat down on a chair in front of Gran without saying anything.

「So, what's the story?」

「Ah, that's right.What should I say first. Well, I think this should come first. Congratulations on passing the rank up test.」

「It's a bit embarrassing being told that.....but I would like to say thanks. So, saying congratulations surely isn't the only thing you want to say right?」

「Naturally. I'll cut to the chase. As you know, adventurers can receive and accept requests from the request board. However, there are also other types of requests. One such type is the nominated request. Did you hear about them when you registered with the guild?」

At Gran's words, he thought back to what Lenora had told him when he was registering with the guild, but as he hadn't heard about it then, he shook his head.

「No, I have not heard of nominated requests. But well, I can roughly guess what it is from the name. Instead of leaving it on the request board for all adventurers, is it a request where the client nominates an adventurer?」

「That's more or less correct. Naturally, because the adventurer is directly nominated, the degree of difficulty is usually higher and they may be subject to confidentiality regarding the situation of the client.」

While saying that, Gran had a slightly bitter expression. From that look, Rei could feel that he didn't have a good impression of nominated requests.

「So, the fact that you've told that to me.....」

「That's correct. Rei, there has been a nominated request for you.」

「.....Well, I realised from the direction of the conversation, but why me? I only just got to rank D today.」

「Yes. Certainly, you are a novice who just reached rank D today. From the perspective of most adventurers, you're only a young kid in rank D with no skills or experience. However, at the same time, you have the strength to defeat a rank B Orc King by yourself and tame a Griffon, a rank A monster. If you look at only combat strength, you're not in rank D.」

「So I'm a special D rank adventurer?」

Gran nodded at Rei's question.

「In addition, the person who nominated Rei for this request is a big shot in this city.」

「.....From those words, is it a noble?」

Even the city of Gimuru had its own nobles. There wasn't just the Neutral faction that the lord of Gimuru, Margrave Rowlocks, belonged to. The King's faction and the Noble's faction weren't small in the city either. At any rate, Gimuru was the only city in frontier territory that Margrave Rowlocks governed. In other words, as the threat of monsters needed to be dealt with directly, there were many talented adventurers at the frontier. If things went well, the factions planned to scout them. Because of that, Rei asked Gran if it was a request from nobility.....

「That's right, as you said, it is a noble. I mean, it's from the lord of the city of Gimuru.」

「.....What?」

「As I said, the lord of the city of Gimuru, Margrave Rowlocks, has nominated you for this request.」

「Why would the Margrave nominate me.....no, don't tell me.」

Asking Gran, he immediately realised with a bitter smile.

As Gran had said earlier, he was accompanied by a Griffon, an A rank monster. He also had the ability to defeat an Orc King. It would be strange if someone hadn't reported this to the Margrave.

「I think I understand the situation. The Margrave Rowlocks seems to have been paying attention to you for a while. At any rate, the rank up exam seems to have been carried out under direct orders from the Margrave.」

「Is he trying to tie me to him?」

For Rei, it was the only reason he could think of for the Margrave to provide him such conveniences.

At any rate, that wouldn't be strange as he had exceptional abilities for a rookie who just registered with the guild.

「Well, I don't know about that. After all, a Margrave is a title in the upper nobility. I'm only a guild staff member, I can't understand what such a person would be thinking. However, I think that he wants you to stay as an important combat force for the city rather than trying to put a leash on you.The nobility in this country is divided into 3 main powers. Did you know that?」

「Ahh. That was written in a book in the library. The King's faction, the Nobles faction and the Neutral faction, those 3?」

「That's right. The smallest out of them is the Neutral faction and Margrave Rowlocks is seen as a big shot in that faction. In other words, leaving the city of Gimuru has a similar meaning to reducing the combat strength of the Neutral faction. Though I would be cautious about this.....well, this is only my suspicions as a guild staff member. You shouldn't worry about it too much.」

Though Gran said that with a wry smile, Rei gave a big nod as that was a helpful opinion and could serve as a reference.

「Well, the talk has gone off topic. So, about the nominated request..... one week from now, the only daughter of Duke Kerebel, who is a central figure in the Nobles faction, will be coming to the city of Gimuru.」

「.....As a central figure in the Nobles faction, why would he send his only daughter to a city of an opposing faction?」

「Ahh. Even though you say that, it doesn't seem to be for a factional dispute this time.At the very least, as the other party has stated as such, there's no need to worry about it.」

「Then, why would someone like a noble's daughter bother to come to the frontier?」

「That, apparently her objective seems to be a dungeon.」

「Dungeon?」

「Ahh. When you had that dispute with the Claws of the Hawk, do you remember what Runo talked about?」

Runo. Recalling that name, the face of the good looking man, who had treated Rei's dispute with the Claws of the Hawk with indifference, came to mind.

「If I remember correctly, he said he had magic eyes which could directly see magic power.」

「Yes, that guy. So, you would have heard that your dispute with Claws of the Hawk happened after they had a successful venture into the dungeon?」

「Come to think of it, such a thing was mentioned.In other words, the Duke's daughter has come here for the dungeon?」

Really? Rei's eyes seemed to say as he looked at Gran.

However, Gran shook his head while looking at Rei with a wry smile.

「I don't know what you just imagined but Duke Kerebel's daughter is different from your typical young noblewoman. She's currently registered as a rank B adventurer.....she has the same level of ability as the lower rank A adventurers.」

「.....I heard it before, but just to check, she's a duke's daughter?」

「Ah.」

「What came to mind when I thought of a young noblewoman was a girl carefully brought up like a flower or butterfly.....is that wrong?」

「Well, generally speaking, you're not wrong. In fact, most daughters of nobles in the Imperial Capital match your description. However, Duke Kerebel's daughter is different. From what I heard, in a skirmish with the Bestir Empire 2 years ago, she led Duke Kerebel's knights through the battlefield, eventually killing the enemy general in single combat.」

Bestir Empire. It was one of the countries adjacent to the Mireana Kingdom and was one of the biggest powers on the continent. It's strength was comparable to that of the Mireana Kingdom, which was also a leading power. It also had an expansionist policy and even now was bringing small neighbouring countries under its rule.

Of course, Rei had learned about the country from the library. He also knew that the Bestir Empire had been in conflict with the Mireana Kingdom for many years.

However, as expected, it was the first time he had heard of a duke's daughter running through a battlefield.

「Is she really a duke's daughter? It differs from my imagination by too much.」

「Ah well. To be honest, it's quite unusual. The Bestir Empire is even afraid of her, calling her the General Princess. The name has since spread to the Mireana Kingdom.」

「General Princess, hey.....can a noble call themselves princess?」

「Don't ask me. Ask the Bestir Empire that. But well, I don't think it's wrong to call a noble's daughter princess. So, going back to the story. Though I don't know why, the General Princess seems to have taken only several attendants to go to the dungeon. Because of that, Duke Kerebel made a request to Margrave Rowlocks.」

At Gran's words, he understood but frowned his eyebrows slightly.

「Then rather than rank D, shouldn't A or B rank parties be employed? Or a thief like Culotte, since it's a dungeon.」

That was clearly a valid question. At any rate, the Duke was sending his beloved daughter to the dangerous place known as a dungeon. If adventurers were employed as guards, it would be more reassuring if they were high ranking adventurers with proven abilities. There should be no need to request an adventurer who just entered rank D.

「Though I haven't been given many details, apparently, adventurers of rank C or higher are no good.」

「.....That's rather suspicious, isn't it.」

「Ah well. However, Margrave Rowlocks can't refuse the Duke without a clear reason.」

In fact, because of the difference in power between the Nobles and Neutral factions, if the Neutral faction members were not careful, they would immediately be cornered. Moreover, Margrave Rowlocks could only accept due to the difference in social position between a margrave and a duke.

「So, that's why Margrave Rowlocks had no choice but to accept the request. If the Duke's daughter, known as the General Princess, were to die in this territory.....what would happen, you can probably guess?」

「In the worst case, Margrave Rowlocks would lose his nobility.」

「Ah. Even in the best scenario, a considerable amount of territory would be lost.Well, it wouldn't be too much of a problem even if some territory is lost because Margrave Rowlocks' only city is this city of Gimuru. However, if the city of Gimuru were to be taken away.....」

He let out a deep sigh at Gran's words.

「So, that is the reason why I was chosen to be an escort despite being only rank D.」

「That's right. In the first place, she is a person called the General Princess. She went out to a battlefield and even killed the enemy general in single combat, it stands to reason that she's considerably strong. Because of that, Rei is probably only an emergency backup. The fact you are accompanied by a Griffon is also good.」

「For now, I would like to know, can a nominated request be refused?」

「After telling you the story, I more or less expected you to ask that. Normally, it's possible to refuse a nominated request, it's not unusual either. However, the client this time is Margrave Rowlocks, the lord of the city. You cannot decline it.」

Hearing Gran's words, he thought about the request in his mind.

(It can't be refused. However, this request is also a chance to go to the dungeon, which I've been wanting to do. Because there seems to be a considerably high chance of high ranking monsters appearing in the dungeon, I can expect a large amount of quality magic stones.The problem is, will there

be suspicion if I don't sell the magic stones.....no, the problem is the Duke's daughter from the Imperial Capital. Though I don't the reason why she needs to go to the dungeon, she will probably quickly leave the frontier once her work is done. Then the probability of her noticing the unnaturalness of not selling the magic stones should be low.)

「By the way, can I enter the dungeon with Set? Or to be more precise, is there enough space in the dungeon for someone as big as Set to fight?」

「There are no problems regarding that. Basically, monsters bigger than your Griffon, Set, can be found in the dungeon. There's no need to worry about inconveniencing other people in the area.」

「I see. If that's the case, I can manage.」

「If you're saying that, then can I assume you will take the request?」

「Who was it that said I couldn't refuse it?」

At Rei's words, Gran could only give a wry smile.

「Though that's true, the person's attitude is important as well. So, you're okay in receiving it?」

「Ah. So, what should I do? Do I just have to come to the guild in a week, after the General Princess arrives?」

「That's right. Well, more details will be given in the next few days. You have to be in good physical condition. It would be no joke if the request comes around and you can't fight because you're injured. It would be good if you don't take any subjugation requests for the next week.」

「.....Is that necessary?」

To that question which was asked involuntarily, Gran gave a serious nod.

「Ah. After all, it involves the safety of the Duke's daughter and the fate of the city of Gimuru is involved. You're there for that reason.」

「.....Haa~, I understand. By the way, what's the reward?」

「The reward for successful completion is 2 light gold coins.」

TLN: Quick reminder, 1 light gold coin is 10 platinum coins. According to the author's exchange rate, about 20k USD.

「.....Are you serious?」

2 light gold coins. As the reward for the completion of a single request, it was

rare, even in rank A.

「I've said this many times, but this is a very important request. So keep that in mind. 」

Thus, as Rei had just risen to D rank, he was suddenly forced to receive a nominated request.

And, although this request would become an important turning point for Rei, he had no way of knowing himself.

Chapter 59

Hearing from Gran about the contents of the nominated request in one week's time, Rei reluctantly accepted it. He walked down the guild stairs while thinking about the request that would start the next week.

「Ah, Rei-kun. You're the last one, did something happen?」

Though Kenny called out as soon as she saw Rei, as he couldn't talk about the Duke's daughter with so many people around, he gave an appropriate excuse.

「Just something about the rank up test I just did. After all, it was the first time I've had to be a party leader.」

「Is that so. But certainly, Rei is usually solo.Since you've risen to rank D, have you thought about joining a party soon? You know, various requests will start to have increased risks and dangers.」

「Wait, don't be rude. Rei-san has various circumstances of his own.」

To Kenny who was asserting that Rei should join a party, Lenora gave a rebuke from nearby.

「What, Lenora, are you saying that Rei should continue to solo?」

「I didn't really say that, I'm saying that we shouldn't interfere as staff members of the guild.」

「.....I understand. Really, Lenora is so harsh. It's because of that that your body is so hard and doesn't have any womanly softness.」

As Kenny softly muttered into the surroundings, those words that subtly hinted at Lenora's delicate build. Lenora instantly raised her eyebrows.

「Hey, Kenny. That's something I can't ignore. Who said such a thing?」

「No one in particular. Everyone says that.」

Pressed by Lenora, Kenny replied in a provocative tone.

Naturally, Lenora couldn't stay silent and they started arguing as usual.

Fortunately, it was in the afternoon and there weren't many adventurers in the guild. In addition, most of them were in the tavern area, eating a late lunch.

.....However, as expected, they wouldn't act like this during adventurer peak hours in the morning and evening.

「Well then, since you seem to be busy, I'll get going. See you later.」

「Ah, wai-Rei-kun!? Onee-san wants to celebrate your passing of the rank up test.....」

「Hey Kenny! You're still in the middle of work!」

Lenora intervened. Kenny's invitation was probably because she had been told that he had passed the rank up test from the people who had come down earlier.

While hearing such exchanges from behind him, Rei left the guild.

「Gururu~」

Set gave a cry to welcome Rei while being stroked by several children.

Looking closely, one of the children stroking Set was the one who had tried to give Set some dried meat just before Rei went out for the rank up test.

「Ah, Onii-chan. Look, Set is eating the dried meat I gave him.」

The boy happily said that to Rei when he noticed him.

Rei gave his usual wry smile when he heard that as he scratched Set's head.

「That's good. We have to get going now, is that okay?」

「Yes! Until next time Set.」

After the boy said that, he ran back towards downtown. The other children ran after him after they greeted Rei and Set.

Rei watched the children go while stroking Set's back.

「Before I knew it, I've become a fairly popular person in the city.」

「Guru~」

「Well then, lets go back to the inn.That said, what should we do for the next week.」

Though he hadn't been banned from taking subjugation requests, he had been warned by Gran not to take them if possible. Then could he do collection requests? Thinking about that, 1 man and 1 animal returned to their usual

lodging at the Dusk Wheat inn.

On the way back, they bought some simple food from the open air stalls.

At any rate, since they couldn't eat it all at once, he stored the rest into the Misty Ring as they wouldn't rot and would stay fresh. Because of that, he went shopping without reserve.

While contributing to the sales of the food stalls as usual, they arrived back at the Dusk Wheat inn. As he said goodbye to Set at the stables, Rei saw a scene outside of his imagination in the inn.

「Ah, Rei. Come here, come here. Why were you so slow?」

Firuma called out to him while drinking a glass of wine.

「He certainly was slow.」

Supervia added in as he ate a large meat stew.

「.....」

Scola was concentrating on his magic book in the same way as in the meeting room and didn't notice Rei.

「.....Hmph.」

Arogan carried a meat skewer to his mouth while turning his head away.

「Were you surprised? Then the surprise was a success.」

Culotte greeted Rei with a smile.

「.....What's going on?」

While replying to the 5 people, he went to the table.

「What, it's the celebration for passing the rank up test. Because it's a special event, you have to celebrate.」

「No, I mean I never heard about this?」

「That's right. The rest of the party talked about it when you were still in the meeting room.」

Understanding that it seemed to have been decided when he had been forcibly detained, Rei sat down in an empty seat.

Then, as if waiting for that, Lana gave a Rei a glass of wine.

「Rei-san, congratulations on passing the rank up test.」

「Ahh, I did it somehow.」

「Now then, lets raise a toast in celebration with Rei.....hey, Rei. Because you're the party leader you also have do this.」

Forcibly told by Culottes, he lifted his wine glass while spitting out a sigh.

「Then, to congratulate all members who participated in the rank up test and passed successfully and for our future activities.....cheers!」

『Cheers!』

At this time, Arogan did not object and happily gave a toast before drinking.

「That said, as expected the rank up test was tough. Both physically and mentally.」

Culotte said that while frowning her eyebrows slightly. Although the alcohol may have been an influence, you could tell from her tone that she had gotten over killing people.

「That's true, it's not a very pleasant thing to talk about though.」

Firuma agreed to that.

Though it didn't really show on her face while fighting, in the end, she still was under considerable mental pressure to kill a person.

「.....Oh, sorry, sorry. I didn't mean to talk about those gloomy things. Changing the topic. What are everyone's plans after reaching rank D? As for me.....」

Culotte hesitated and and glanced towards Arogan and Scola for an instant.

「I'll be forming a party with those 2.」

Those surprising words were said.

「Hey, there's no need to tell everyone else.」

「What. There's no problem if it's the people we ranked up with. I mean, we're in the same group.」

「.....I thought you 2 were arguing about the matter of the reward, when did it

become like this?」

At Culotte's remark, Rei was amazed and asked with a surprised face.

But instead of Arogan or Culotte answering that, it was Scola, who had finally stopped reading his magic book to enjoy his meal.

「That seems to be the cause of it」

「That?」

「Yes. After arguing about the reward, they ended up getting along with each other. So the talk progressed smoothly after that.」

「No, I mean, are you fine with that? You were originally in a party with Culotte.」

Supervia interjected as he heard the conversation between Rei and Scola but Scola nodded with no problems.

「Hey, you know that Culotte and I are a thief and mage? Because the party was only us 2, we had talked about the lack of a vanguard for a while. If we divided us 2 into front and rear, only Culotte could take the front.....but in the end, she's a thief. We determined that we had a lack of defensive power. If you think about it, I'm happy that a strong warrior like Arogan has entered the party.」

「But, have you thought about party compatibility?」

To Firuma's question, he gave a wry smile at their quarrel.....or rather, Arogan and Culotte's playful argument.

TLN: Did you just get NTRed Scola? You can't let that happen! Be a man!

「Well you see, those two are similar.」

「.....Something like arguing in the family.」

As Rei murmured, maybe because of the alcohol that they had drank, Scola, Supervia and Firuma unintentionally burst into laughter.

「Then why don't the three of you set up a party? With Supervia and Rei in the vanguard as a warrior and magic warrior, and with Firuma, who can use spirit magic and the bow, in the rear, I think the balance is perfect.」

「Hmm. That's an interesting thought, I would join if I can defeat Rei.....well, at the very least not until the point I can fight with him for at least 5 minutes.」

With a wry smile, Supervia muttered as he drank his glass of wine before ordering some ale from Lana, the proprietress.

With his pride as a warrior, he probably couldn't accept being weaker than Rei and leeching off him.

「Well.....I don't particularly mind. What about you Rei?」

At Firuma's words, Rei shook his head.

「Whether you make a party or not, it will be impossible for while.」

「Ara~, why?」

Everyone at that place, including Arogan and Culotte, who were arguing playfully just a few seconds ago, looked towards Rei. He judged that the people here wouldn't spread the story and started to speak.

「I've received a bit of a difficult request. Because I don't know how long I will be with the other party, it will have to wait until that is settled.」

「Ah, is that the reason why you had to remain in the meeting room?」

He nodded to Culotte's words.

「Ahh. Even though I've just risen to rank D, I was suddenly given a nominated request.」

「.....Well, it's not a strange story given Rei's strength.」

Supervia nodded while saying that.

He had fought mock battles with with Rei until they reached the bandit hideout during the test, seen his abilities during the battle against the bandits and fought mock battles with him on the way back. To Supervia, who had had a mock battle with Rei for almost every day during the rank up test, he didn't find anything strange with Rei receiving a nominated request as soon as he reached rank D. Rather, he felt that it was a recognition of his fighting strength.

「Though I acted as the party leader this time, I understand that I'm not suited for group actions. At the very least, being the party leader is too unpleasant to accept.」

「Though you can certainly solo if you're strong enough Rei.....isn't it a little risky?」

「Though I understand Culotte's worries, I have my companion, Set.....ahh, he's my Griffon. We can work as 1 man and 1 animal for now.」

In fact, if you just think of Set's combat strength, he was a strong monster, a Griffon. He had also learned several skills by absorbing magic stones. As for his combat strength, you could say that it was greater than an A rank adventurer.

(Adding to that, there's also the matter of arguing over magic stones. Considering that, it's one of the reasons to solo.)

While thinking that in his mind, he brought some of the stir fried Poison Toad thigh meat to his mouth.

At that moment, the door into the Dusk Wheat opened and two people walked inside.

And the two people went straight to the table Rei was at.

「I heard it in the guild, congratulations on ranking up.」

「Congratulations」

A mage and an archer said that to him. Rei recognised both of them.

「Sulunin, Excel. It's been a while. Thanks for looking after Set while I was away.」

「No, no, we should say thanks to you.Ah, mind if we join?」

To Sulunin's voice as he looked around, as there wasn't any objections in particular, they all nodded and directed him to a seat.

「But still, rank D already. It seems you'll catch up to us in no time.」

「Oba-chan, can you get me and him some ale? Um, please pick something suitable.」

Excel made an order for Lana as she sat down on a seat as well.

「Rei, these people are.....」

At Firuma's question,

「Ahh. They are Sulunin and Excel from Scorching Wind. I met them during the Orc subjugation.Come to think of it, where's Milein? Is she doing something else today?」

「Ah.....that is.」

Sulunin scratched his cheek with a wry smile. Just by seeing this, Rei roughly guessed.

「I see, the stables.」

「Yes. We heard in the guild yesterday that Rei-kun had come back, so it seems she misses Set even more.」

「So, that's the reason she rushed to the stables.Well, that's fine. She'll come in here to drink sooner or later」

「That's right. I think that's highly likely. Then, to celebrate everyone's promising promotion, we'll pay tonight.」

「.....Are you sure? I thought you said you had no money a little while ago.」

「What, we were able to take out the Treants without much effort because of Set. We have enough to spare now.」

In this way, the festivities continued.

During the feast, Scorching Wind, Firuma and the other 5 threw away all their reservations as they relaxed in their own ways.